THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D

VOL. III.



SAMUEL JOHNSON. L.L.D.



THE

LIFE

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

INCLUDING

A JOURNAL OF HIS TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES;

BY

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

NEW EDITION,

WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS AND NOTES,

BY

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN WILSON CROKER, M.P.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

TWO SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUMES OF JOHNSONIANA,

BY HAWKINS, PIOZZI, MURPHY, TYERS, REYNOLDS,
MALONE, NICHOLS, STEEVENS, CUMBERLAND,
AND OTHERS.

AND NOTES BY VARIOUS HANDS.

ALSO, UPWARDS OF

FIFTY ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

1765—1767.

CHAPTER II.

1768.

CHAPTER III.

1769.

CHAPTER IV.

1769—1770.

CHAPTER V.

1770.

CHAPTER VI.

1771.

CHAPTER VII.

1772.

CHAPTER VIII.

1772—1773.

CHAPTER IX.

1773.

CHAPTER X.

1773.

APPENDIX.

THE

L I F E

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

1765—1767.

Boswell's Thesis.—Study of the Law.—Rash Vows.—Streatham. — Oxford. — London Improvements. — Dedications.— Mrs. Williams's Miscellanies.— Mr. William Drummond.— Translation of the Bible into the Gaelic — Case of Heely. Dr. Robertson.—Cuthbert Shaw.—' Tom Hervey.' — Johnson's Interview with King George III. — Warburton and Lowth.— Lord Lyttleton's History. — Dr. Hill. — Literary Journals.— Visit to Lichfield.—Death of Catherine Chambers.—Lexiphanes.— Mrs. Aston.

After I had been some time in Scotland, I mentioned to him in a letter that "On my first return to my native country, after some years of absence, I was told of a vast number of my acquaintance who were all gone to the land of forgetfulness, and I found myself like a man stalking over a field of battle, who every moment perceives some one lying dead." I complained of irresolution, and mentioned my having made a vow as a security for good

[illegible] I wrote to him again without being able [illegible] his indolence: nor did I hear from him till [illegible] received a copy of my inaugural Exercise, or Thesis in Civil Law, which I published at my admission as an Advocate, as is the custom in Scotland. He then wrote to me as follows: —

LETTER 100. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, August 10 1766.

"DEAR SIR, — The reception of your Thesis put me in mind of my debt to you. Why did you . . . . (1)? I will punish you for it, by telling you that your Latin wants correction. (2) In the beginning, *Spei alteræ*, not to urge that it should be *primæ*, is not grammatical; *alteræ* should be *alteri*. In the next line you seem to use *genus* absolutely, for what we call *family*, that is, for *illustrious extraction*, I doubt without authority. *Homines nullius originis*, for *nullis orti majoribus*, or *nullo loco nati*, is, as I am afraid, barbarous. — Ruddiman is dead. (3)

(1) The passage omitted alluded to a private transaction.

(2) This censure of my Latin relates to the dedication, which was as follows — "Viro nobilissimo, ornatissimo, Joanni, Vicecomiti Mountstuart, atavis edito regibus, excelsæ familiæ de Bute *spei alteræ*, labente seculo, quum homines *nullius originis genus* æquare opibus aggrediuntur, sanguinis antiqui et illustris semper memori, natalium splendorem virtutibus augenti: ad publica populi comitia jam legato, in optimatium vero Magnæ Britanniæ senatu, jure hæreditario, olim consessuro: vim insitam variâ doctrinâ promovente, nec tamen se venditante, prædito priscâ fide, animo liberrimo, et morum elegantiâ insigni: in Italiæ visitandæ itinere socio suo honoratissimo hasce jurisprudentiæ primitias, devinctissimæ amicitiæ et observantiæ, monumentum, D. D. C. Q. Jacobus Boswell."

(3) He says *Ruddiman* (a great grammarian) *is dead* — as in former days it was said that *Priscian's head was broken*. Ruddiman, who was born in 1674, had died in 1757. See *ante*, Vol. I p. 246. — CROKER.

"I have now vexed you enough, and will try to please you. Your resolution to obey your father I sincerely approve; but do not accustom yourself to enchain your volatility by vows; they will sometime leave a thorn in your mind, which you will, perhaps, never be able to extract or eject. Take this warning; it is of great importance.

"The study of the law is what you very justly term it, copious and generous (1); and in adding your name to its professors, you have done exactly what I always wished, when I wished you best. I hope that you will continue to pursue it vigorously and constantly. You gain, at least, what is no small advantage, security from those troublesome and wearisome discontents, which are always obtruding themselves upon a mind vacant, unemployed, and undetermined

"You ought to think it no small inducement to diligence and perseverance, that they will please your father. We all live upon the hope of pleasing somebody, and the pleasure of pleasing ought to be greatest, and at last always will be greatest, when our endeavours are exerted in consequence of our duty

"Life is not long, and too much of it must not pass in idle deliberation how it shall be spent: deliberation which those who begin it by prudence, and continue it with subtilty, must, after long expense of thought, conclude by chance. To prefer one future mode of life to another, upon just reasons, requires faculties which it has not pleased our Creator to give us.

"If, therefore, the profession you have chosen has some unexpected inconveniences, console yourself by reflecting that no profession is without them, and that

(1) This alludes to the first sentence of the Proœmium of my Thesis. "Jurisprudentiæ studio nullum uberius, nullum generosius: in legibus enim agitandis, populorum mores, variasque fortunæ vices ex quibus leges oriuntur, contemplari simul solemus."

all the importunities and perplexities of business are softness and luxury, compared with the incessant cravings of vacancy, and the unsatisfactory expedients of idleness.—

> 'Hæc sunt quæ nostrâ potui te voce monere;
> Vade, age.'

"As to your History of Corsica, you have no materials which others have not, or may not have. You have, somehow or other, warmed your imagination. I wish there were some cure, like the lover's leap, for all heads of which some single idea has obtained an unreasonable and irregular possession. Mind your own affairs, and leave the Corsicans to theirs.—I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 101. TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

"Auchinlech, Nov. 6, 1766.

"Much esteemed and dear Sir,—I plead not guilty to . . . .(1)

"Having thus, I hope, cleared myself of the charge brought against me, I presume you will not be displeased if I escape the punishment which you have decreed for me unheard. If you have discharged the arrows of criticism against an innocent man, you must rejoice to find they have missed him, or have not been pointed so as to wound him.

"To talk no longer in allegory, I am, with all deference, going to offer a few observations in defence of my Latin, which you have found fault with.

"You think I should have used *spei primæ* instead of *spei alteræ*. *Spes* is, indeed, often used to express

(1) The passage omitted explained the transaction to which the preceding letter had alluded.

something on which we have a future dependence, as in Virg. Eclog. i. l. 14.—

'—— modo namque gemellos
Spem gregis, ah! silice in nudâ connixa reliquit:'

and in Georg. iii. l. 473.—

'*Spemque* gregemque simul,'

for the lambs and the sheep. Yet it is also used to express any thing on which we have a present dependence, and is well applied to a man of distinguished influence,—our support, our refuge, our *præsidium*, as Horace calls Mæcenas. So, Æneid xii. l. 57., Queen Amata addresses her son-in-law, Turnus:—'Spes *tu nunc una*:' and he was then no future hope, for she adds,—

'—— decus imperiumque Latini
Te penes;'

which might have been said of my Lord Bute some years ago. Now I consider the present Earl of Bute to be '*Excelsæ familiæ de Bute* spes prima;' and my Lord Mountstuart, as his eldest son, to be '*spes altera*.' So in Æneid xii. l. 168., after having mentioned Pater Æneas, who was the *present* spes, the *reigning* spes, as my German friends would say, the *spes prima*, the poet adds,—

'Et juxta Ascanius, magnæ *spes altera* Romæ.'(1)

"You think *alteræ* ungrammatical, and you tell me it should have been *alteri*. You must recollect, that in

(1) It is very strange that Johnson, who in his letter quotes the Æneid, should not have recollected this obvious and decisive authority for *spes altera*, nor yet the remarkable use of these words, attributed to Cicero, by Servius and Donatus; the expressions of the latter are conclusive in Mr. Boswell's favour:—"*At cum Cicero quosdam versus* (*Virgilii*) *audisset, in fine ait*: 'Magnæ spes altera Romæ:'—*Quasi ipse linguæ Latinæ* spes prima *fuisset, et Maro futurus esset* secunda." Donat. vit. Vir. § 41.—CROKER.

old times *alter* was declined regularly; and when the ancient fragments preserved in the *Juris Civilis Fontes* were written, it was certainly declined in the way that I use it. This, I should think, may protect a lawyer who writes *alteræ* in a dissertation upon part of his own science. But as I could hardly venture to quote fragments of old law to so classical a man as Mr. Johnson, I have not made an accurate search into these remains, to find examples of what I am able to produce in poetical composition. We find in Plaut. Rudens, act iii. scene 4.—

'Nam huic *alteræ* patria quæ sit profecto nescio.'

Plautus is, to be sure, an old comic writer; but in the days of Scipio and Lælius, we find Terent. Heautontim. act ii. scene 3.—

'—— hoc ipsa in itinere *alteræ*
Dum narrat, forte audivi.'

"You doubt my having authority for using *genus* absolutely, for what we call *family*, that is, for *illustrious extraction*. Now I take *genus* in Latin to have much the same signification with *birth* in English; both in their primary meaning expressing simply descent, but both made to stand κατ' ἐξοχὴν for noble descent. *Genus* is thus used in Hor. lib. ii. Sat. v. l. 8.—

'Et *genus* et virtus, nisi cum re, vilior algâ est.'

And in lib. i. Epist. vi. l. 37.

'Et *genus* et formam Regina Pecunia donat.'

And in the celebrated contest between Ajax and Ulysses, Ovid's Metamorph. lib. xiii. l. 140.—

'Nam *genus* et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco.'

"*Homines nullius originis*, for *nullis orti majoribus* or *nullo loco nati*, is, 'you are afraid, barbarous.'

"*Origo* is used to signify extraction, as in Virg. Æneid i. 286. —

'Nascetur pulchrâ Trojanus *origine* Cæsar:'

and in Æneid x. l. 618. —

'Ille tamen nostrâ deducit *origine* nomen.'

and as *nullus* is used for obscure, is it not in the genius of the Latin language to write *nullius originis*, for obscure extraction?

"I have defended myself as well as I could.

"Might I venture to differ from you with regard to the utility of vows? I am sensible that it would be very dangerous to make vows rashly, and without a due consideration. But I cannot help thinking that they may often be of great advantage to one of a variable judgment and irregular inclinations. I always remember a passage in one of your letters to our Italian friend Baretti; where, talking of the monastic life, you say 'you do not wonder that serious men should put themselves under the protection of a religious order, when they have found how unable they are to take care of themselves.'(1) For my own part, without affecting to be a Socrates, I am sure I have a more than ordinary struggle to maintain with *the Evil Principle;* and all the methods I can devise are little enough to keep me tolerably steady in the paths of rectitude.

"I am ever, with the highest veneration, your affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

It appears from Johnson's diary, that he was this year at Mr. Thrale's (2), from before Midsummer

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 132.]

(2) In the year 1766, Mr. Johnson's health grew so bad, that he could not stir out of his room, in the court he inhabited, for many *weeks* together — I think *months*. Mr. Thrale's attentions

till after Michaelmas, and that he afterwards passed a month at Oxford. He had then contracted a great intimacy with Mr. Chambers of that University afterwards Sir Robert Chambers, one of the Judges in India.

He published nothing this year in his own name; but the noble Dedication* to the King, of Gwyn's "London and Westminster Improved,"(1) was written by him; and he furnished the Preface,† and several of the pieces, which compose a volume of Miscellanies by Mrs. Anna Williams, the blind lady who

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and my own now became so acceptable to him, that he often lamented to us the horrible condition of his mind, which he said was nearly distracted; and though he charged us to make him odd solemn promises of secrecy on so strange a subject, yet when we waited on him one morning, and heard him, in the most pathetic terms, beg the prayers of Dr. Delap [Rector of Lewes], who had left him as we came in, I felt excessively affected with grief, and well remember that my husband involuntarily lifted up one hand to shut his mouth, from provocation at hearing a man so wildly proclaim what he could at last persuade no one to believe, and what, if true, would have been so very unfit to reveal. Mr. Thrale went away soon after, leaving me with him, and bidding me prevail on him to quit his close habitation in the court and come with us to Streatham, where I undertook the care of his health, and had the honour and happiness of contributing to its restoration. — Piozzi.

(1) In this work Mr. Gwyn proposed the *principle*, and in many instances the *details*, of the most important improvements which have been made in the metropolis in our day. A bridge near Somerset House — a great street from the Haymarket to the New Road — the improvement of the interior of St. James's Park — quays along the Thames — new approaches to London Bridge — the removal of Smithfield market, and several other suggestions on which we pride ourselves as original designs of our own times, are all to be found in Mr. Gwyn's able and curious work. It is singular, that he denounced a row of houses *then* building in Pimlico, as intolerable nuisances to Buckingham Palace, and of these very houses the public voice *now* calls for the destruction. Gwyn had "the prophetic eye of taste." — Croker.

had an asylum in his house.(1) Of these, there are his "Epitaph on Philips;"* "Translation of a Latin Epitaph on Sir Thomas Hanmer;"† "Friendship, an Ode;"* and, "The Ant,"* a paraphrase from the Proverbs, of which I have a copy in his own hand-writing; and, from internal evidence, I ascribe to him, "To Miss ——, on her giving the Author a gold and silk network Purse of her own weaving;"† (2) and "The happy Life."‡ — Most of the pieces in this volume have evidently received additions from his superior pen, particularly "Verses to Mr. Richardson, on his Sir Charles Grandison;" "The Excursion;" "Reflections on a Grave digging in Westminster Abbey." There is in this collection a poem, "On the death of Stephen Grey, the Electrician;"* which, on reading it, appeared to me to be undoubtedly Johnson's. I asked Mrs. Williams whether it was not his. "Sir," said she, with some warmth, "I wrote that poem before I had the honour

(1) As to her poems, she many years attempted to publish them: the half-crowns she had got towards the publication, she confessed to me, went for necessaries, and that the greatest pain she ever felt was from the appearance of defrauding her subscribers: "but what can I do? the Doctor [Johnson] always puts me off with 'Well, we'll think about it;' and Goldsmith says, 'Leave it to me.'" However, two of her friends, under her directions, made a new subscription at a crown, the whole price of the work, and in a very little time raised sixty pounds. Mrs. Carter was applied to by Mrs. Williams's desire, and she, with the utmost activity and kindness, procured a long list of names. At length the work was published, in which is a fine written but gloomy tale of Dr. Johnson. The money (150*l.*) Mrs. Williams had various uses for, and a part of it was funded. — LADY KNIGHT.

(2) See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 206. n., where it is shown that the "Translation of the Epitaph on Hanmer," and the "Verses on the Purse," are by Hawkesworth. — C.

of Dr. Johnson's acquaintance." I, however, was so much impressed with my first notion, that I mentioned it to Johnson, repeating, at the same time, what Mrs. Williams had said. His answer was, "It is true, Sir, that she wrote it before she was acquainted with me; but she has not told you that I wrote it all over again, except two lines." "The Fountains,"† a beautiful little Fairy tale in prose, written with exquisite simplicity, is one of Johnson's productions; and I cannot withhold from Mrs. Thrale the praise of being the author of that admirable poem, "The Three Warnings."

He wrote this year a letter, not intended for publication, which has, perhaps, as strong marks of his sentiment and style, as any of his compositions. The original is in my possession. It is addressed to the late Mr. William Drummond, bookseller in Edinburgh, a gentleman of good family, but small estate, who took arms for the house of Stuart in 1745; and during his concealment in London till the act of general pardon came out, obtained the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, who justly esteemed him as a very worthy man. It seems some of the members of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge had opposed the scheme of translating the Holy Scriptures into the Erse or Gaelic language, from political considerations of the disadvantage of keeping up the distinction between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of North Britain. Dr. Johnson being informed of this, I suppose by Mr. Drummond, wrote with a generous indignation as follows:—

LETTER 102. TO MR. WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

"Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, Aug. 13. 1766.

"SIR,—I did not expect to hear that it could be, in an assembly convened for the propagation of Christian knowledge, a question whether any nation uninstructed in religion should receive instruction; or whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the holy books into their own language. If obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he that withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbour as himself. He that voluntarily continues ignorance is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces; as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a light-house, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwrecks. Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity; and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example, except in the practice of the planters of America, — a race of mortals whom, I suppose, no other man wishes to resemble.

"The Papists have, indeed, denied to the laity the use of the Bible; but this prohibition, in few places now very rigorously enforced, is defended by arguments, which have for their foundation the care of souls. To obscure, upon motives merely political, the light of revelation, is a practice reserved for the reformed; and, surely, the blackest midnight of popery is meridian sunshine to such a reformation. I am not very willing that any language should be totally extinguished. The

similitude and derivation of languages afford the most indubitable proof of the traduction of nations, and the genealogy of mankind. They add often physical certainty to historical evidence; and often supply the only evidence of ancient migrations, and of the revolutions of ages which left no written monuments behind them.

"Every man's opinions, at least his desires, are a little influenced by his favourite studies. My zeal for languages may seem, perhaps, rather over-heated, even to those by whom I desire to be well esteemed. To those who have nothing in their thoughts but trade or policy, present power, or present money, I should not think it necessary to defend my opinions; but with men of letters I would not unwillingly compound, by wishing the continuance of every language, however narrow in its extent, or however incommodious for common purposes, till it is reposited in some version of a known book, that it may be always hereafter examined and compared with other languages, and then permitting its disuse. For this purpose, the translation of the Bible is most to be desired. It is not certain that the same method will not preserve the Highland language, for the purposes of learning, and abolish it from daily use. When the Highlanders read the Bible, they will naturally wish to have its obscurities cleared, and to know the history, collateral or appendant. Knowledge always desires increase; it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself. When they once desire to learn, they will naturally have recourse to the nearest language by which that desire can be gratified; and one will tell another, that if he would attain knowledge, he must learn English.

"This speculation may, perhaps, be thought more subtle than the grossness of real life will easily admit. Let it, however, be remembered, that the efficacy of ignorance has long been tried, and has not produced the

consequence expected. Let knowledge, therefore, take its turn; and let the patrons of privation stand awhile aside, and admit the operation of positive principles.

"You will be pleased, Sir, to assure the worthy man who is employed in the new translation (1), that he has my wishes for his success; and if here or at Oxford I can be of any use, that I shall think it more than honour to promote his undertaking.

"I am sorry that I delayed so long to write. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

The opponents of this pious scheme being made ashamed of their conduct, the benevolent undertaking was allowed to go on.

The following letters, though not written till the year after, being chiefly upon the same subject, are here inserted.

LETTER 108. TO MR. WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

"Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, April 21. 1767.

"DEAR SIR, — That my letter should have had such effects as you mention, gives me great pleasure. I hope you do not flatter me by imputing to me more good

(1) The Rev. Mr. John Campbell, minister of the parish of Kippen, near Stirling, who has lately favoured me with a long, intelligent, and very obliging letter upon this work, makes the following remark: — "Dr. Johnson has alluded to the worthy man employed in the translation of the New Testament. Might not this have afforded you an opportunity of paying a proper tribute of respect to the memory of the Rev. Mr. James Stuart, late minister of Killin, distinguished by his eminent piety, learning, and taste? The amiable simplicity of his life, his warm benevolence, his indefatigable and successful exertions for civilising and improving the parish of which he was minister for upwards of fifty years, entitle him to the gratitude of his country, and the veneration of all good men. It certainly would be a pity, if such a character should be permitted to sink into oblivion."

than I have really done. Those whom my arguments have persuaded to change their opinion, shew such modesty and candour as deserve great praise.

"I hope the worthy translator goes diligently forward. He has a higher reward in prospect than any honours which this world can bestow. I wish I could be useful to him.

"The publication of my letter, if it could be of use in a cause to which all other causes are nothing, I should not prohibit. But first, I would have you to consider whether the publication will really do any good; next, whether by printing and distributing a very small number, you may not attain all that you propose; and what perhaps I should have said first, whether the letter, which I do not now perfectly remember, be fit to be printed. If you can consult Dr. Robertson, to whom I am a little known, I shall be satisfied about the propriety of whatever he shall direct. If he thinks that it should be printed, I entreat him to revise it; there may, perhaps, be some negligent lines written, and whatever is amiss, he knows very well how to rectify. (1) Be pleased to let me know, from time to time, how this excellent design goes forward.

"Make my compliments to young Mr. Drummond, whom I hope you will live to see such as you desire him. I have not lately seen Mr. Elphinston, but believe him to be prosperous. I shall be glad to hear the same of you, for I am, Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) This paragraph shows Johnson's real estimation of the character and abilities of the celebrated Scottish Historian, however lightly, in a moment of caprice, he may have spoken of his works. — B. — He seems never to have spoken otherwise than slightingly of Dr. Robertson's *works*, however he may have respected his *judgment* on this particular subject. See *post*, p. 44. — April 19. 1772, — April 30, 1773, &c. — C. — [Dr. Johnson might think not very highly of Dr. Robertson as an *historian*, and yet do justice to him as an elegant and sensible literator.]

LETTER 104. TO THE SAME.

"Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, Oct. 24. 1767.

"SIR, — I returned this week from the country, after an absence of near six months, and found your letter with many others, which I should have answered sooner, if I had sooner seen them.

"Dr. Robertson's opinion was surely right. Men should not be told of the faults which they have mended. I am glad the old language is taught, and honour the translator, as a man whom God has distinguished by the high office of propagating his word.

"I must take the liberty of engaging you in an office of charity. Mrs. Heely, the wife of Mr. Heely, who had lately some office in your theatre, is my near relation, and now in great distress. They wrote me word of their situation some time ago, to which I returned them an answer which raised hopes of more than it is proper for me to give them. Their representation of their affairs I have discovered to be such as cannot be trusted; and at this distance, though their case requires haste, I know not how to act. She, or her daughters, may be heard of at Canongate-head. I must beg, Sir, that you will inquire after them, and let me know what is to be done. I am willing to go to ten pounds, and will transmit you such a sum, if upon examination you find it likely to be of use. If they are in immediate want, advance them what you think proper. What I could do I would do for the woman, having no great reason to pay much regard to Heely himself. (1)

(1) This is the person concerning whom Sir John Hawkins has thrown out very unwarrantable reflections both against Dr. Johnson and Mr. Francis Barber. — B.

Hawkins wished to persuade the world that Dr. Johnson acted unjustifiably in preferring (in the disposal of his property) Barber to this man, whom Sir John and his daughter, in her *Memoirs*, call Johnson's *relation*, but who, in fact, had only married his relation. She was dead, and Heely had married another woman, at the time when Hawkins affected to think that he had claims to be Dr. Johnson's heir. — C.

"I believe you may receive some intelligence from Mrs. Baker of the theatre, whose letter I received at the same time with yours; and to whom, if you see her, you will make my excuse for the seeming neglect of answering her.

"Whatever you advance within ten pounds shall be immediately returned to you, or paid as you shall order. I trust wholly to your judgment. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Mr. Cuthbert Shaw (1), alike distinguished by his genius, misfortunes, and misconduct, published this year a poem, called "The Race, by Mercurius Spur, Esq." in which he whimsically made the living poets of England contend for pre-eminence of fame by running:

"Prove by their heels the prowess of the head."

In this poem there was the following portrait of Johnson:

"Here Johnson comes,—unblest with outward grace,
His rigid morals stamp'd upon his face;
While strong conceptions struggle in his brain;
(For even wit is brought to bed with pain:)
To view him, porters with their loads would rest,
And babes cling frighted to the nurses' breast.
With looks convulsed he roars in pompous strain,
And, like an angry lion, shakes his mane.
The Nine, with terror struck, who ne'er had seen
Aught human with so terrible a mien,
Debating whether they should stay or run,
Virtue steps forth, and claims him for her son.
With gentle speech she warns him now to yield,
Nor stain his glories in the doubtful field;

(1) [Cuthbert Shaw was born in 1738 or 1739, and died, overloaded with complicated distress, in Titchfield Street, Oxford Market, Sept. 1. 1771.]

But wrapt in conscious worth, content sit down,
Since Fame, resolved his various pleas to crown,
Though forced his present claim to disavow,
Had long reserved a chaplet for his brow.
He bows, obeys; for time shall first expire,
Ere Johnson stay, when Virtue bids retire.

The Hon. Thomas Hervey (1) and his lady having unhappily disagreed, and being about to separate, Johnson interfered as their friend, and wrote him a letter of expostulation, which I have not been able to find; but the substance of it is ascertained by a letter to Johnson in answer to it, which Mr. Hervey printed. The occasion of this correspondence between Dr. Johnson and Mr. Hervey, was thus related to me by Mr. Beauclerk. "Tom Hervey had a great liking for Johnson, and in his will had left him a legacy of fifty pounds. One day he said to me. 'Johnson may want this money now, more than afterwards. I have a mind to give it him directly. Will you be so good as to carry a fifty pound note from me to him?' This I positively refused to do, as he might, perhaps, have knocked me down for insulting him, and have afterwards put the note in his pocket. But I said, if Hervey would write him a letter, and enclose a fifty pound note, I should take care to deliver it. He accordingly did write him a letter, mentioning that he was only paying a legacy a little sooner. To his letter he added, '*P.S. I am*

(1) The Hon. Thomas Hervey, whose "Letter to Sir Thomas Hanmer" in 1742, was much read at that time. He was the second son of John, first Earl of Bristol, and one of the brothers of Johnson's early friend, Henry Hervey. He [was born in 1698,] married, in 1744, Anne, daughter of Francis Coughlan, Esq., and died Jan. 20, 1775. — M.

going to part with my wife.' Johnson then wrote to him, saying nothing of the note, but remonstrating with him against parting with his wife."

When I mentioned to Johnson this story, in as delicate terms as I could, he told me that the fifty pound note was given (1) to him by Mr. Hervey in consideration of his having written for him a pamphlet against Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who, Mr. Hervey imagined, was the author of an

(1) This is not inconsistent with Mr. Beauclerk's account. It may have been in consideration of this pamphlet that Hervey left Johnson the fifty pounds in his will, and on second thoughts he may have determined to send it to him. It were, however, to be wished, that the story had stood on its original ground. The acceptance of an anticipated legacy from a friend would have had nothing objectionable in it; but can so much be said for the employment of one's pen for hire, in the disgusting squabbles of so mischievous and profligate a madman as Mr. Thomas Hervey? "He was well known," says the gentle biographer of the Peerage, "for his genius and eccentricities." The Letter to Sir Thomas Hanmer, above mentioned, was the first, it is believed, of the many appeals which Mr. Hervey made to the public, relative to his private concerns. The subject is astonishing. Lady Hanmer eloped from her husband with Mr. Hervey, and made, it seems, a will, in his favour, of certain estates, of which Sir Thomas had a life possession. Hervey's letter avows the adultery, and assigns very strange reasons for the lady's leaving her husband, and then goes on to complain, that Sir Thomas was cutting timber on the estate which had belonged to "*our wife*," so he calls her, and of which the reversion was his, and begging that if he did sell any more timber, he would give him, Hervey, the refusal of it. All this is garnished and set off by extravagant flights of fine writing, the most cutting sarcasms, the most indecent details, and the most serious expressions of the writer's conviction, that his conduct was natural and delicate, and such as every body must approve; and that, finally, *in Heaven*, Lady Hanmer, in the distribution of wives (*suum cuique*), would be considered as his. — Johnson, as we shall see hereafter, characterised his friend, Tom Hervey, as he had already done (*antè*, Vol. I. p. 118.) his brother Henry, as very vicious. Alas! it is but too probable, that both were disordered in mind, and that what was called vice was, in truth, *disease*, and required a madhouse rather than a prison. — CROKER.

attack upon him; but that it was afterwards discovered to be the work of a garreteer (1), who wrote "The Fool:" the pamphlet therefore against Sir Charles was not printed.

In February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honoured by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms and noble collection of books (2), which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the King had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while in-

(1) Some curiosity would naturally be felt as to who the *garreteer* was, who wrote a pamphlet, which was attributed to Sir C. H. Williams, the wittiest man of his day, and to answer which, the wild and sarcastic genius of Hervey required the assistance of Dr. Johnson. His name was William Horsley, but his acknowledged works are poor productions. — C. — [Sir C. H. Williams's clever but often indecent poems were collected into three volumes in 1822, and are discussed at length in the Quarterly Review, vol. xxviii. p. 46. He was born in 1709, and died in a state of insanity, it has been said by his own hands, Nov. 2. 1759.]

(2) Dr. Johnson had the honour of contributing his assistance towards the formation of this library; for I have read a long letter from him to Mr. Barnard, giving the most masterly instructions on the subject. I wished much to have gratified my readers with the perusal of this letter, and have reason to think that his Majesty would have been graciously pleased to permit its publication; but Mr. Barnard, to whom I applied, declined it "on his own account." — B. — [See this Letter, *post*, May 28. 1768.]

dulging his literary taste in that place; so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson came next to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which, while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the King was, and, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the King's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.(1)

(1) The particulars of this conversation I have been at great pains to collect with the utmost authenticity, from Dr. Johnson's own detail to myself, from Mr. Langton, who was present when he gave an account of it to Dr. Joseph Warton, and several other friends at Sir Joshua Reynolds's; from Mr. Barnard; from the copy of a letter written by the late Mr. Strahan the printer, to Bishop Warburton; and from a minute, the original of which is among the papers of the late Sir James Caldwell, and a copy of which was most obligingly obtained for me from his son Sir John Caldwell, by Sir Francis Lumm. To all these gentlemen I beg leave to make my grateful acknowledgments, and particularly to Sir Francis Lumm, who was pleased to take a great deal of trouble, and even had the minute laid before the King by Lord Caermarthen, now Duke

His Majesty began by observing, that he understood he came sometimes to the library; and then mentioning his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered, that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The King then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respects they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at that time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All-Souls or Christ-Church library was the largest, he answered, "All-Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Ay," said the King, "that is the public library."

His Majesty inquired if he was then writing any thing. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty

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of Leeds, then one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, who announced to Sir Francis the royal pleasure concerning it by a letter, in these words: — "I have the King's commands to assure you, Sir, how sensible his Majesty is of your attention in communicating the minute of the conversation previous to its publication. As there appears no objection to your complying with Mr. Boswell's wishes on the subject, you are at full liberty to deliver it to that gentleman, to make such use of in his Life of Dr. Johnson, as he may think proper.'

well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The King, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labours, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from any body." Johnson said, he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too," said the King, "if you had not written so well." Johnson observed to me, upon this, that "No man could have paid a handsomer compliment (1); and it was fit for a King to pay. It was decisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, Sir. When the King had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my Sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shown a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness, than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty having observed to him that he supposed he must have read a great deal; Johnson answered, that he thought more than he read; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much, compared with others: for instance, he said he had not read much, compared with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the King said, that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you could scarce talk with

(1) Johnson himself imitated it to Paoli (see post, Oct. 10. 1769), and it is indeed become one of the common-places of compliment. — C.

him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting, in its universality. (1) His Majesty then talked of the controversy (2) between Warburton and Lowth, which he seemed to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has most general, most scholastic learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion; adding, "You do not think then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case." Johnson said, he did not think there was. "Why truly," said the King, "when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty then asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's history, which was then just published. Johnson said, he thought his style pretty good, but that he had blamed Henry the Second rather too much. "Why," said the King, "they seldom do these things by halves." — "No, Sir," answered Johnson, "not to Kings." But fearing to be misunderstood, he proceeded to explain himself; and immediately subjoined, "That for those who

(1) The Rev. Mr. Strahan clearly recollects having been told by Johnson, that the King observed that Pope made Warburton a bishop. "True, Sir," said Johnson, "but Warburton did more for Pope; he made him a Christian:" alluding, no doubt, to his ingenious comments on the "Essay on Man. — B. — [See this explained, *post*, Aug. 20. 1773, in the course of Johnson's conversation with Lord Monboddo, when visiting him at his country-house in Scotland.]

(2) [See the article *Lowth*, in Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary, vol. xx. p. 438.]

spoke worse of Kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse; but that he could more easily conceive how some might speak better of them than they deserved, without any ill intention; for, as Kings had much in their power to give, those who were favoured by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises: and as this proceeded from a good motive, it was certainly excusable, as far as error could be excusable."

The King then asked him what he thought of Dr. Hill. (1) Johnson answered, that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity; and immediately mentioned, as an instance of it, an assertion of that writer, that he had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time than by using one. "Now," added Johnson, "every one acquainted with microscopes knows, that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear." — "Why," replied the King, "this is not only telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for, if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him." (2)

"I now," said Johnson to his friends, when re-

(1) [John Hill, M.D., who assumed latterly the title of Sir John, on receiving a Swedish order of Knighthood. This literary and medical quack died in 1775. Garrick's Epigram is well known: —

" For physic and farces, his equal there scarce is;
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is."]

(2) Hill does *not* talk of magnifying objects by *two or more* microscopes, but by applying *two object glasses* to *one* microscope; and the advantage of diminished spherical errors by this contrivance is well known. Hill's account of the experiment (Veg. System, Lond. 1770, p. 44.) is obscurely and inaccurately expressed in one or two particulars; but there can be no doubt that he is substantially right, and that Dr. Johnson's statement was altogether unfounded. — ELRINGTON.

lating what had passed, "began to consider that I was depreciating this man in the estimation of his Sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something that might be more favourable." He added, therefore, that Dr. Hill was, notwithstanding, a very curious observer; and if he would have been contented to tell the world no more than he knew, he might have been a very considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation.

The King then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Savans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said, it was formerly very well done, and gave some account of the persons who began it, and carried it on for some years: enlarging, at the same time, on the nature and use of such works. The King asked him if it was well done now. Johnson answered, he had no reason to think that it was. (1) The King then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the Monthly and Critical Reviews (2); and on being answered there was no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best: Johnson answered, that the Monthly Review was done with most care, the Critical upon the best principles; adding, that the authors of the Monthly Review were enemies to

(1) [I can hardly express how much I am delighted with the *Journal des Savans*: its characteristics are erudition, precision, and taste; but what I most admire is that impartiality and candour which distinguish the beauties and defects of a work, giving to the former due and hearty praise, and calmly and tenderly pointing out the latter. — GIBBON.]

(2) [The Monthly Review was established in 1749; the Critical Review in 1756.]

the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the Philosophical Transactions, when Johnson observed that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Ay," said the King, "they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that;" for his Majesty had heard and remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. (1) Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, Johnson showed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation, and gracious behaviour. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Lewis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second." (2)

(1) This perhaps may have given Dr. Johnson the first idea of the most popular and entertaining of all his works, "The Lives of the Poets." — C.

(2) This reminds us of Madame de Sevigné's charming naïveté, when, after giving an account of Louis XIV. having danced with her, she adds, "Ah! c'est le plus grand roi du monde!" — C.

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends was collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was very active in pressing him to mention the particulars. "Come now, Sir, this is an interesting matter; do favour us with it." Johnson, with great good-humour, complied.

He told them, "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his Sovereign. In the first place, a man cannot be in a passion ——." Here some question interrupted him, which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation, where the powers of the mind are at once excited to vigorous exertion, and tempered by reverential awe.

During all the time in which Dr. Johnson was employed in relating to the circle at Sir Joshua Reynolds's the particulars of what passed between the King and him, Dr. Goldsmith remained unmoved upon a sopha at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. He assigned as a reason for his gloom and seeming inattention, that he apprehended Johnson had relinquished his purpose of furnishing him with a Prologue to his play, with the hopes of which he had been flattered; but it was strongly suspected that he was fretting with chagrin and envy at the singular honour Dr. Johnson had lately enjoyed. At length, the frankness and simplicity of his natural

[illegible] prevailed. He sprung from the sofa, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter, from imagining himself in the situation which he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it." (1)

I received no letter from Johnson this year; nor have I discovered any of the correspondence (2) he had, except the two letters to Mr. Drummond, which have been inserted, for the sake of connection with that to the same gentleman in 1766. His diary affords no light as to his employment at this time. He passed three months at Lichfield (3): and I can-

(1) It is singular that Johnson should have been in the presence of Queen Anne and of George the Fourth. George the First he probably never saw, but George the Second he must frequently have seen, and he once told Sir John Hawkins, that, in a visit to Mrs. Percy, who had the care of one of the young princes, at the Queen's house, the Prince of Wales, being then a child, came into the room, and began to play about; when Johnson, with his usual curiosity, took an opportunity of asking him what books he was reading, and, in particular, inquired as to his knowledge of the Scriptures; the Prince, in his answers, gave him great satisfaction, and, as to the last, said, that part of his daily exercises was to read Ostervald — no doubt the popular *Catechism* and "Abridgment of Sacred History" of J. F. Ostervald, an eminent Swiss divine, who died in 1747, in the 84th year of his age. — C.

(2) It is proper here to mention, that when I speak of his correspondence, I consider it independent of the voluminous collection of letters which, in the course of many years, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, — which forms a separate part of his works; and, as a proof of the high estimation set on any thing which came from his pen, was sold by that lady for the sum of five hundred pounds.

(3) In his letter to Mr. Drummond, dated Oct. 24. 1767, he mentions that he had arrived in London, after an absence of nearly *six months* in the country. Probably part of that time was spent at Oxford. — M.

not omit an affecting and solemn scene there, as related by himself:—

"Sunday, Oct. 18, 1767. Yesterday, Oct. 17., at about ten in the morning, I took my leave for ever of my dear old friend, Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

"I desired all to withdraw, then told her that we were to part for ever; that as Christians we should part with prayer; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me; and held up her poor hands, as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed, kneeling by her, nearly in the following words:—

"Almighty and most merciful Father, whose loving kindness is over all thy works, behold, visit, and relieve this thy servant, who is grieved with sickness. Grant that the sense of her weakness may add strength to her faith, and seriousness to her repentance. And grant that by the help of thy Holy Spirit, after the pains and labours of this short life, we may all obtain everlasting happiness, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord, for whose sake hear our prayers. (1) Amen. Our Father, &c.

"I then kissed her. She told me, that to part was the greatest pain that she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed, and parted. I humbly hope to meet again, and to part no more." ( )

(1) The greater part of this prayer is in the Visitation of the Sick, in our Liturgy.—ELRINGTON.

(2) Catherine Chambers died in a few days after this interview, and was buried in St. Chads, Lichfield, on the 7th of Nov. 1767.—HARWOOD.

By those who have been taught to look upon Johnson as a man of a harsh and stern character, let this tender and affectionate scene be candidly read; and let them then judge whether more warmth of heart, and grateful kindness, is often found in human nature.

LETTER 105. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Lichfield, July 20. 1767.

"THOUGH I have been away so much longer than I purposed or expected, I have found nothing that withdraws my affections from the friends whom I left behind, or which makes me less desirous of reposing at that place which your kindness and Mr. Thrale's allows me to call my *home*.

"Miss Lucy is more kind and civil than I expected, and has raised my esteem by many excellencies very noble and resplendent, though a little discoloured by hoary virginity. Every thing else recalls to my remembrance years in which I proposed what, I am afraid, I have not done, and promised myself pleasure which I have not found."

We have the following notice in his devotional record:—

"August 2. 1767. I have been disturbed and unsettled for a long time, and have been without resolution to apply to study or to business, being hindered by sudden snatches.

"I have for some days forborne wine and suppers. Abstinence is not easily practised in another's house; but I think it fit to try.

"I was extremely perturbed in the night, but have had this day more ease than I expected. D[eo] gr[atia].' Perhaps this may be such a sudden relief as I once had by a good night's rest in Fetter Lane.

"From that time, by abstinence, I have had more ease. I have read five books of Homer, and hope to end the sixth to-night. I have given Mrs. ——— a guinea.

"By abstinence from wine and suppers, I obtained sudden and great relief, and had freedom of mind restored to me; which I have wanted for all this year, without being able to find my means of obtaining it."

He, however, furnished Mr. Adams with a Dedication * to the King of that ingenious gentleman's "Treatise on the Globes," conceived and expressed in such a manner as could not fail to be very grateful to a monarch, distinguished for his love of the sciences.

This year was published a ridicule of his style, under the title of "Lexiphanes." Sir John Hawkins ascribes it to Dr. Kenrick; but its author was one Campbell, a Scotch purser in the navy. The ridicule consisted in applying Johnson's "words of large meaning," to insignificant matters, as if one should put the armour of Goliath upon a dwarf. The contrast might be laughable; but the dignity of the armour must remain the same in all considerate minds. This malicious drollery (1), therefore, it may easily be supposed, could do no harm to its illustrious object.

(1) It may have been malicious, but it certainly is not droll. It is so overcharged, as to have neither resemblance nor pleasantry. Sir J. Hawkins, in his second edition, attributed it to Campbell. — C. [This effusion of sportive malignity was the production of Archibald Campbell, the son of Professor Archibald Campbell, of St. Andrew's. He was also author of "The Sale of Authors; a Dialogue, in imitation of Lucian." — ANDERSON.]

LETTER 106. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Mr. Rothwell's, Perfumer, in New Bond Street.

"Lichfield, Oct. 10. 1767.

"DEAR SIR, — That you have been all summer in London is one more reason for which I regret my long stay in the country. I hope that you will not leave the town before my return. We have here only the chance of vacancies in the passing carriages, and I have bespoken one that may, if it happens, bring me to town on the fourteenth of this month; but this is not certain. It will be a favour if you communicate this to Mrs. Williams: I long to see all my friends. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 107. TO MRS. ASTON.(1)

"Nov. 17. 1767.

"MADAM, — If you impute it to disrespect or inattention, that I took no leave when I left Lichfield, you will do me great injustice. I know you too well not to value your friendship.

"When I came to Oxford I inquired after the product of our walnut-tree, but it had, like other trees this year, but very few nuts, and for those few I came too late. The tree, as I told you, madam, we cannot find to be more than thirty years old, and, upon measuring it, I found it, at about one foot from the ground, seven feet in circumference, and at the height of about seven feet, the circumference is five feet and a half; it would have been, I believe, still bigger, but that it has been lopped. The nuts are small, such as they call single nuts; whether this nut is of quicker growth than better I have not yet inquired; such as they are, I hope to send them next year.

(1) Parker MSS. Elisabeth, one of the youngest daughters of Sir Thomas Aston: see *ante*, Vol. I. p. 85. n. — C.

"You know, dear madam, the liberty I took of hinting, that I did not think your present mode of life very pregnant with happiness. Reflection has not yet changed my opinion. Solitude excludes pleasure, and does not always secure peace. Some communication of sentiments is commonly necessary to give vent to the imagination, and discharge the mind of its own flatulencies. Some lady surely might be found, in whose conversation you might delight, and in whose fidelity you might repose. *The world*, says Locke, *has people of all sorts.* You will forgive me this obtrusion of my opinion; I am sure I wish you well.

"Poor Kitty has done what we have all to do, and Lucy has the world to begin anew: I hope she will find some way to more content than I left her possessing.

"Be pleased to make my compliments to Mrs. Hinckley and Miss Turton. I am, Madam, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

CHAPTER II.

1768.

State of Johnson's Mind. — Visit to Town-malling. — Prologue to Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man." — Boswell publishes his "Account of Corsica." — Practice of the Law. — Novels and Comedies. — The Douglas Cause. — Reading MSS. — St. Kilda. — Oxford. — Guthrie. — Hume. — Robertson. — Future Life of Brutes. — Scorpions. — Maupertuis. — Woodcocks. — Swallows. — Bell's Travels. — Chastity. — Choice of a Wife. — Baretti's Italy. — Liberty. — Kenrick. — Thomson. — Monsey. — Swift. — Lord Eglintoune. — Letter on the Formation of a Library. — Boswell at the Stratford Jubilee. — Johnson's Opinion of the "Account of Corsica."

It appears from his notes of the state of his mind, that he suffered great perturbation and distraction in 1768.

"Town-malling, in Kent, (1) 18th Sept. 1768, at night. — I have now begun the sixtieth year of my life. How the last year has past, I am unwilling to terrify myself with thinking. This day has been past in great perturbation: I was distracted at church in an uncommon degree, and my distress has had very little intermission. I have found myself somewhat relieved by reading, which I therefore intend to practise when I am able. This day it came into my mind to write the history of my melancholy. On this I purpose to deli-

(1) [At Town-malling Johnson occasionally visited Mr Brooke. See *post*, August 23. 1777.]

berate; I know not whether it may not too much disturb me."

Nothing of his writings was given to the public this year, except the Prologue* to his friend Goldsmith's comedy of "The Good-natured Man." The first lines of this Prologue are strongly characteristical of the dismal gloom of his mind; which in his case, as in the case of all who are distressed with the same malady of imagination, transfers to others its own feelings. Who could suppose it was to introduce a comedy, when Mr. Bensley solemnly began,

"Press'd with the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind."

But this dark ground might make Goldsmith's humour shine the more. (1)

In the spring of this year, having published my "Account of Corsica, with the Journal of a Tour to that Island," I returned to London, very desirous to see Dr. Johnson, and hear him upon the subject. I found he was at Oxford, with his friend Mr. Chambers, who was now Vinerian Professor, and lived in New-Inn Hall. Having had no letter from him since that in which he criticised the Latinity of my Thesis, and having been told by somebody that he was offended at my having put into my book an

(1) In this prologue, after the line — "And social sorrow loses half its pain," the following couplet was inserted: —

*"Amidst the toils of this returning year,
When senators and nobles learn to fear,*
Our *little* bard without complaint may share
The bustling season's epidemic care."

So the prologue appeared in the *Public Advertiser*. Goldsmith probably thought that the lines printed in Italic characters might give offence, and therefore prevailed on Johnson to omit them. The epithet *little*, which perhaps the author thought might diminish his dignity, was also changed to *anxious*. — M.

extract of his letter to me at Paris, I was impatient to be with him, and therefore followed him to Oxford, where I was entertained by Mr. Chambers, with a civility which I shall ever gratefully remember. I found that Dr. Johnson had sent a letter to me to Scotland, and that I had nothing to complain of but his being more indifferent to my anxiety than I wished him to be. Instead of giving, with the circumstances of time and place, such fragments of his conversation as I preserved during this visit to Oxford, I shall throw them together in continuation.

I asked him whether, as a moralist, he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty. JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir, if you act properly. You are not to deceive your clients with false representations of your opinion: you are not to tell lies to a Judge." BOSWELL. "But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you do not know it to be good or bad till the Judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning, must be from your supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, Sir, that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself, may convince the Judge to whom you urge it: and if it does convince him, why, then, Sir, you are wrong, and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the Judge's opinion." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, does

not affecting a warmth when you have no warmth, and appearing to be clearly of one opinion when you are in reality of another opinion, does not such dissimulation impair one's honesty? Is there not some danger that a lawyer may put on the same mask in common life, in the intercourse with his friends?" JOHNSON: "Why no, Sir. Every body knows you are paid for affecting warmth for your client; and it is, therefore, properly no dissimulation: the moment you come from the bar you resume your usual behaviour. Sir, a man will no more carry the artifice of the bar into the common intercourse of society, than a man who is paid for tumbling upon his hands will continue to tumble upon his hands when he should walk on his feet." (1)

Talking of some of the modern plays, he said, "False Delicacy" (2) was totally void of character. He praised Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man;" said it was the best comedy that had appeared since

(1) See *post*, Aug. 15. 1773, where Johnson has supported the same argument. — J. BOSWELL, jun.

Cicero touches this question more than once, but never with much confidence. "Atqui etiam hoc præceptum officii diligenter tenendum est, ne quem unquam innocentem judicio capitis arcessas; id, enim, sine scelere fieri nullo pacto potest. Nec tamen, ut hoc fugiendum est, ita habendum est religioni, *nocentem aliquando*, modo ne *nefarium impiumque*, defendere. Vult hoc multitudo, patitur consuetudo, fert etiam humanitas. Judicis est semper in causas *verum* sequi patroni, nonnunquam verisimile, etiamsi minus sit verum, defendere." (De Off. l. 2. c. 14.) We might have expected a less conditional and apologetical defence of his own profession from the great philosophical orator. — CROKER.

(2) [By Hugh Kelly, an Irishman, originally apprenticed to a staymaker in Dublin, and afterwards clerk in an attorney's office in London, who became a writer for the booksellers, and was called to the bar: he died, an. ætat. 38, Feb. 3. 1777.]

"The Provoked Husband," and that there had not been of late any such character exhibited on the stage as that of Croaker. I observed it was the *Suspirius* of his Rambler [No. 59.]. He said, Goldsmith had owned he had borrowed it from thence. "Sir," continued he "there is all the difference in the world between characters of nature and characters of manners; and *there* is the difference between the characters of Fielding and those of Richardson. Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood, by a more superficial observer, than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart."

It always appeared to me, that he estimated the compositions of Richardson too highly (1), and that he had an unreasonable prejudice against Fielding. (2) In comparing those two writers, he used this expression; "that there was as great a difference between them, as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking on the dial-plate." This was a short and figurative state of his distinction between drawing characters of nature and characters only of manners. But I cannot help being of opinion, that the neat watches of Fielding are as well constructed as the large clocks of Richardson, and that his dial-plates are brighter Fielding's characters, though they do not expand

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 273., and *post*, April 6. 1772. — C.

(2) [How charming, how wholesome, Fielding is! To take him up after Richardson, is like emerging from a sick-room heated by stoves into an open lawn, on a breezy day in May. — COLERIDGE, Table Talk.]

themselves so widely in dissertation, are as just pictures of human nature, and I will venture to say, have more striking features, and nicer touches of the pencil; and though Johnson used to quote with approbation a saying of Richardson's, "that the virtues of Fielding's heroes were the vices of a truly good man," I will venture to add, that the moral tendency of Fielding's writings, though it does not encourage a strained and rarely possible virtue, is ever favourable to honour and honesty, and cherishes the benevolent and generous affections. He who is as good as Fielding would make him, is an amiable member of society, and may be led on by more regulated instructors, to a higher state of ethical perfection. (1)

Johnson proceeded; "Even Sir Francis Wronghead (2) is a character of manners, though drawn with great humour." He then repeated, very happily, all Sir Francis's credulous account to Manly of his being with "the great man," and securing a place. I asked him, if "The Suspicious Husband" (3) did

(1) Johnson was inclined, as being personally acquainted with Richardson, to favour the opinion of his admirers that he was acquainted with the inmost recesses of the human heart, and had an absolute command over the passions; but he seemed not firm in it, and could at any time be talked into a disapprobation of all fictitious relations, of which he would frequently say, they took *no hold of the mind*.—HAWKINS.

(2) [In the comedy of The Provoked Husband, begun by Sir John Vanbrugh and finished by Colley Cibber.]

(3) [By Dr. Benjamin Headly. Garrick's inimitable performance of Ranger was the main support of the piece during its first run. George II. was so well pleased with this comedy, that he sent the author one hundred pounds.]

not furnish a well-drawn character, that of Ranger JOHNSON. "No, Sir; Ranger is just a rake, a mere rake, and a lively young fellow, but no *character*."

The great Douglas Cause was at this time a very general subject of discussion. I found he had not studied it with much attention (1), but had only heard parts of it occasionally. He, however, talked of it, and said, "I am of opinion that positive proof of fraud should not be required of the plaintiff, but that the Judges should decide according as probability shall appear to preponderate, granting to the defendant the presumption of filiation to be strong in his favour. And I think too, that a good deal of weight should be allowed to the dying declarations, because they were spontaneous. There is a great difference between what is said without our being urged to it, and what is said from a kind of compulsion. If I praise a man's book without being asked my opinion of it, that is honest praise, to which one may trust. But if an author asks me if I like his book, and I give him something like praise, it must not be taken as my real opinion."

"I have not been troubled for a long time with authors desiring my opinion of their works. I used once to be sadly plagued with a man who wrote verses, but who literally had no other notion of a verse, but that it consisted of ten syllables. *Lay*

(1) [Boswell, who was counsel on the side of Mr. Douglas, had published, in 1766, a pamphlet entitled the "Essence of the Douglas Cause," but which, it will be seen, *post*, April 27 1773, he could not induce Johnson even to read.]

your knife and your fork across your plate, was to him a verse: —

"Lay yŏur knife ănd your fŏrk acrŏss your plāte."

As he wrote a great number of verses, he sometimes by chance made good ones, though he did not know it." (1)

He renewed his promise of coming to Scotland, and going with me to the Hebrides, but said he would now content himself with seeing one or two of the most curious of them. He said, "Macaulay, who writes the account of St. Kilda, set out with a prejudice against prejudice, and wanted to be a smart modern thinker; and yet he affirms for a truth, that

(1) Dr. Johnson did not like that his friends should bring their manuscripts for him to read, and he liked still less to read them when they were brought: sometimes, however, when he could not refuse, he would take the play or poem, or whatever it was, and give the people his opinion from some one page that he had peeped into. A gentleman carried him his tragedy, which, because he loved the author, Johnson took, and it lay about our rooms at Streatham some time. "What answer did you give your friend, Sir?" asked I, after the book had been called for. "I told him," replied he, "that there was too much *Tig* and *Tirry* in it." Seeing me laugh most violently, "Why, what wouldst have, child?" said he; "I looked at nothing but the dramatis, and there was *Tigranes* and *Tiridates*, or Teribazus, or such stuff. A man can tell but what he knows, and I never got any farther than the first page." — PIOZZI.

In Mr. Murphy's tragedy of Zenobia, acted in 1768, there are two personages named Tigranes and Teribazus. There was a serious difference between Murphy and Garrick, in which Bickerstaff employed Dr. Johnson as a mediator; and in consequence of the reconciliation thus effected, Zenobia was played. It was, no doubt, on this occasion, that the MS. was entrusted to Johnson. At the reconciliation dinner at Bickerstaff's, the last plays happening to be mentioned, Johnson said, "Prithee do not talk of plays; if you do, you will quarrel again." He was, Murphy confessed, a true prophet; for they were always quarrelling. See Foot's Life of Murphy, p. 208. — CROKER.

when a ship arrives there all the inhabitants are seized with a cold."

Dr. John Campbell, the celebrated writer (1), took a great deal of pains to ascertain this fact, and attempted to account for it on physical principles, from the effect of effluvia from human bodies. Johnson, at another time [March 21. 1772], praised Macaulay for his "*magnanimity*," in asserting this wonderful story, because it was well attested. A lady of Norfolk, by a letter [Oct. 2. 1773] to my friend Dr. Burney, has favoured me with the following solution: —

"Now for the explication of this seeming mystery, which is so very obvious as, for that reason, to have escaped the penetration of Dr. Johnson and his friend, as well as that of the author. Reading the book with my ingenious friend, the late Rev. Mr. Christian of Docking — after ruminating a little, 'The cause,' says he, 'is a natural one. The situation of St. Kilda renders a north-east wind indispensably necessary before a stranger can land. The wind, not the stranger, occasions an epidemic cold. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Macaulay is dead; if living, this solution might please him, as I hope it will Mr. Boswell, in return for the many agreeable hours his works have afforded us."

Johnson expatiated on the advantages of Oxford for learning. "There is here, Sir," said he, "such a progressive emulation. The students are anxious to appear well to their tutors; the tutors are anxious to have their pupils appear well in the college; the colleges are anxious to have their students appear

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 195.]

well in the university; and there are excellent rules of discipline in every college. That the rules are sometimes ill observed may be true, but is nothing against the system. The members of an university may, for a season, be unmindful of their duty. I am arguing for the excellency of the institution."

Of Guthrie, he said, "Sir, he is a man of parts. He has no great regular fund of knowledge; but by reading so long, and writing so long, he no doubt has picked up a good deal."

He said he had lately been a long while at Lichfield, but had grown very weary before he left it. BOSWELL. "I wonder at that, Sir; it is your native place." JOHNSON. "Why so is Scotland *your* native place."

His prejudice against Scotland appeared remarkably strong at this time. (1) When I talked of our advancement in literature, "Sir," said he, "you have learnt a little from us, and you think yourselves very great men. Hume would never have written history, had not Voltaire written it before him. He is an echo of Voltaire." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, we have lord Kames. JOHNSON. "You *have* lord Kames. Keep him; ha, ha, ha! We don't envy you him. Do you ever see Dr. Robertson?" BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir." JOHNSON. "Does the dog talk of me?" BOSWELL. "Indeed, Sir, he does,

(1) [Johnson's invectives against Scotland, in common conversation, were more in pleasantry and sport than real and malignant; for no man was more visited by natives of that country, nor were there any for whom he had a greater esteem. It was to Dr. Grainger, a Scottish physician, that I owed my first acquaintance with Johnson, in 1756. — PERCY.]

and loves you." Thinking that I now had him in a corner, and being solicitous for the literary fame of my country, I pressed him for his opinion on the merit of Dr. Robertson's History of Scotland. But, to my surprise, he escaped.—"Sir, I love Robertson, and I won't talk of his book."

It is but justice both to him and Dr. Robertson to add, that though he indulged himself in this sally of wit, he had too good taste not to be fully sensible of the merits of that admirable work.

An essay, written by Mr. Dean, a divine of the Church of England, maintaining the future life of brutes (1), by an explication of certain parts of the Scriptures, was mentioned, and the doctrine insisted on by a gentleman who seemed fond of curious speculation; Johnson, who did not like to hear of any thing concerning a future state which was not authorised by the regular canons of orthodoxy, discouraged this talk; and being offended at its continuation; he watched an opportunity to give the gentleman a blow of reprehension. So, when the poor speculatist, with a serious metaphysical pensive face, addressed him, "But really, Sir, when we see a very sensible dog, we don't know what to think of him;" Johnson, rolling with joy at the thought which beamed in his eye, turned quickly round, and replied, "True, Sir: and when we see a very foolish *fellow*, we don't know what to think of *him*."

(1) "An Essay on the Future Life of Brute Creatures, by Richard Dean, curate of Middleton." This work is reviewed in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1768, p. 177., in a style very like Johnson's; and a story of "a very sensible dog" is noticed with censure.—C.

He then rose up, strided to the fire, and stood for some time laughing and exulting.

I told him that I had several times, when in Italy, seen the experiment of placing a scorpion within a circle of burning coals; that it ran round and round in extreme pain; and finding no way to escape, retired to the centre, and, like a true Stoic philosopher, darted its sting into its head, and thus at once freed itself from its woes. "*This must end 'em.*" I said, this was a curious fact, as it showed deliberate suicide in a reptile. Johnson would not admit the fact. He said, Maupertuis (1) was of opinion that it does not kill itself, but dies of the heat; that it gets to the centre of the circle, as the coolest place; that its turning its tail in upon his head is merely a convulsion, and that it does not sting itself. He said he would be satisfied if the great anatomist Morgagni, after dissecting a scorpion on which the

(1) I should think it impossible not to wonder at the variety of Johnson's reading, however desultory it might have been. Who could have imagined that the High Church of Englandman would be so prompt in quoting *Maupertuis*, who, I am sorry to think, stands in the list of those unfortunate mistaken men, who call themselves *esprits forts*. I have, however, a high respect for that philosopher whom the great Frederic of Prussia loved and honoured, and addressed pathetically in one of his poems,

"*Maupertuis, cher Maupertuis,*
Que notre vie est peu de chose."

There was in Maupertuis a vigour and yet a tenderness of sentiment, united with strong intellectual powers, and uncommon ardour of soul. Would he had been a Christian! I cannot help earnestly venturing to hope that he is one now. — B. — Maupertuis died in 1759, at the age of 62, in the arms of the Bernoullis, *très Chrétiennement*. — BURNEY. — Mr. Boswell seems to contemplate the possibility of a *post mortem* conversion to Christianity. — CROKER.

experiment had been tried, should certify that its sting had penetrated into its head.

He seemed pleased to talk of natural philosophy. "That woodcocks," said he, "fly over the northern countries is proved, because they have been observed at sea. Swallows certainly sleep all the winter. A number of them conglobulate together, by flying round and round, and then all in a heap throw themselves under water, and lie in the bed of a river.' (1) He told us, one of his first essays was a Latin poem upon the glow-worm; I am sorry I did not ask where it was to be found.

Talking of the Russians and the Chinese, he advised me to read Bell's Travels. (2) I asked him whether I should read Du Halde's Account of China. "Why yes," said he, "as one reads such a book; that is to say, consult it."

He talked of the heinousness of the crime of adultery, by which the peace of families was destroyed. He said, "Confusion of progeny constitutes the essence of the crime; and therefore a woman who breaks her marriage vows is much more criminal than a man who does it. A man, to be sure, is criminal in the sight of God; but he does not do his wife a very material injury, if he does not insult her; if, for instance, from mere wantonness of appetite, he steals privately to her chambermaid. Sir, a wife ought not greatly to resent this. I would not receive home a daughter who had run

(1) [This story has been entirely exploded.]

(2) John Bell, of Antermony, who published at Glasgow, in 1763, "Travels from St. Petersburgh, in Russia, to divers Parts of Asia."—C.

away from her husband on that account. A wife should study to reclaim her husband by more attention to please him. Sir, a man will not, once in a hundred instances, leave his wife and go to a harlot, if his wife has not been negligent of pleasing."

Here he discovered that acute discrimination, that solid judgment, and that knowledge of human nature, for which he was upon all occasions remarkable. Taking care to keep in view the moral and religious duty, as understood in our nation, he showed clearly, from reason and good sense, the greater degree of culpability in the one sex deviating from it than the other; and, at the same time, inculcated a very useful lesson as to *the way to keep him.*

I asked him if it was not hard that one deviation from chastity should so absolutely ruin a young woman. JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; it is the great principle which she is taught. When she has given up that principle, she has given up every notion of female honour and virtue, which are all included in chastity."

A gentleman talked to him of a lady whom he greatly admired and wished to marry, but was afraid of her superiority of talents. "Sir," said he, "you need not be afraid; marry her. Before a year goes about, you'll find that reason much weaker, and that wit not so bright." Yet the gentleman may be justified in his apprehension by one of Dr. Johnson's admirable sentences in his Life of Waller: "He doubtless praised many whom he would have been afraid to marry; and, perhaps,

married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow: and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve." (1)

He praised Signor Baretti. "His account of Italy is a very entertaining book; and, Sir, I know no man who carries his head higher in conversation than Baretti. There are strong powers in his mind. He has not, indeed, many books; but with what books he has, he grapples very forcibly."

At this time I observed upon the dial-plate of his watch a short Greek inscription, taken from the New Testament, Νυξ γαρ ερχεται, being the first

(1) The general and constant advice he gave, when consulted about the choice of a wife, a profession, or whatever influences a man's particular and immediate happiness, was always to reject no positive good from fears of its contrary consequences. "Do not," said he, "forbear to marry a beautiful woman, if you can find such, out of a fancy that she will be less constant than an ugly one; or condemn yourself to the society of coarseness and vulgarity, for fear of the expenses or other dangers of elegance and personal charms, which have been always acknowledged as a positive good, and for the want of which there should be always given some weighty compensation. I have, however," continued Mr. Johnson, "seen some prudent fellows who forbore to connect themselves with beauty lest coquetry should be near, and with wit or birth lest insolence should lurk behind them, till they have been forced by their discretion to linger life away in tasteless stupidity, and choose to count the moments by remembrance of pain instead of enjoyment of pleasure." But of the various states and conditions of humanity, he despised none more than the man who marries for a maintenance: and of a friend who made his alliance on no higher principles, he said once, "Now has that fellow" (it was a nobleman of whom they were speaking) "at length obtained a certainty of three meals a day, and for that certainty, like his brother dog in the fable, he will get his neck galled for life with a collar."—Piozzi.

words of our Saviour's solemn admonition to the improvement of that time which is allowed us to prepare for eternity; "*the night cometh* (1) when no man can work." He sometime afterwards laid aside this dial-plate; and when I asked him the reason, he said, "It might do very well upon a clock which a man keeps in his closet; but to have it upon his watch, which he carries about with him, and which is often looked at by others, might be censured as ostentatious." Mr. Steevens is now possessed of the dial-plate inscribed as above.

He remained at Oxford a considerable time. I was obliged to go to London, where I received this letter, which had been returned from Scotland.

LETTER 108. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Oxford, March 23. 1768.

"MY DEAR BOSWELL,—I have omitted a long time to write to you, without knowing very well why. I could now tell why I should not write; for who would write to men who publish the letters of their friends, without their leave? (2) Yet I write to you in spite of my caution, to tell you that I shall be glad to see you, and that I wish you would empty your head of Corsica which I think has filled it rather too long. But, at all events, I shall be glad, very glad, to see you. I am, Sir, yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) [Sir Walter Scott put the same Greek words on a sun-dial in his garden at Abbotsford.—J. G. L.]

(2) Mr. Boswell, in his "Journal of a Tour in Corsica," had printed the second and third paragraphs of Johnson's letter to him of January 14. 1766. See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 305. —C.

I answered thus:—

LETTER 109. TO MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"London, April 26. 1768.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your last letter, which, though very short, and by no means complimentary, yet gave me real pleasure, because it contains these words, 'I shall be glad, very glad, to see you.'—Surely you have no reason to complain of my publishing a single paragraph of one of your letters; the temptation to it was so strong. An irrevocable grant of your friendship, and your dignifying my desire of visiting Corsica with the epithet of 'a wise and noble curiosity,' are to me more valuable than many of the grants of kings.

"But how can you bid me 'empty my head of Corsica?' My noble-minded friend, do you not feel for an oppressed nation bravely struggling to be free? Consider fairly what is the case. The Corsicans never received any kindness from the Genoese. They never agreed to be subject to them. They owe them nothing, and when reduced to an abject state of slavery, by force, shall they not rise in the great cause of liberty, and break the galling yoke? And shall not every liberal soul be warm for them? Empty my head of Corsica! Empty it of honour, empty it of humanity, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety. No! while I live, Corsica, and the cause of the brave islanders, shall ever employ much of my attention, shall ever interest me in the sincerest manner. I am, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 110. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Oxford, March 24. 1768.

"Our election was yesterday. Every possible influence of hope and fear was, I believe, enforced on this

occasion; the slaves of power, and the solicitors of favour, were driven hither from the remotest corners of the kingdom; but *judex honestum prætulit utili*. The virtue of Oxford has once more prevailed. The death of Sir Walter Bagot, a little before the election, left them no great time to deliberate, and they therefore joined to Sir Roger Newdigate (1), their old representative, an Oxfordshire gentleman of no name, no great interest, nor perhaps any other merit, than that of being on the right side; yet when the poll was numbered, it produced — For Sir R. Newdigate, 352; Mr. Page, 296; Mr. Jenkinson, 198; Dr. Hay, 62. Of this I am sure you must be glad; for, without inquiring into the opinions or conduct of any party, it must be for ever pleasing to see men adhering to their principles against their interest, especially when you consider that those voters are poor, and never can be much less poor by the favour of those whom they are now opposing."

LETTER 111. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER

"Oxford, April 18. 1768

"MY DEAR, DEAR LOVE, — You have had a very great loss. (2) To lose an old friend, is to be cut off from a great part of the little pleasure that this life allows. But such is the condition of our nature, that as we live on we must see those whom we love drop successively, and find our circle of relations grow less and less, till we are almost unconnected with the world; and then it

(1) [Sir Roger Newdigate died in 1806, in his eighty-seventh year, after having represented the University of Oxford in five parliaments. Among other benefactions to his Alma Mater, he gave the noble antique candelabra in the Radcliffe Library, and founded an annual prize for English verses on ancient painting, sculpture, and architecture.]

(2) The death of her aunt, Mrs. Hunter, widow of Johnson's schoolmaster. See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 40. — C.

must soon be our turn to drop into the grave. There is always this consolation, that we have one Protector who can never be lost but by our own fault, and every new experience of the uncertainty of all other comforts should determine us to fix our hearts where true joys are to be found. All union with the inhabitants of earth must in time be broken; and all the hopes that terminate here, must on [one] part or other end in disappointment.

"I am glad that Mrs. Adey and Mrs. Cobb do not leave you alone. Pay my respects to them, and the Sewards, and all my friends. When Mr. Porter comes, he will direct you. Let me know of his arrival, and I will write to him.

"When I go back to London, I will take care of your reading-glass. Whenever I can do any thing for you, remember, my dear darling, that one of my greatest pleasures is to please you.

"The punctuality of your correspondence I consider as a proof of great regard. When we shall see each other, I know not, but let us often think on each other, and think with tenderness. Do not forget me in your prayers. I have for a long time back been very poorly; but of what use is it to complain? Write often, for your letters always give great pleasure to, my dear, your most affectionate, and most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

Upon his arrival in London in May, he surprised me one morning with a visit at my lodging in Half-moon Street, was quite satisfied with my explanation, and was in the kindest and most agreeable frame of mind. As he had objected to a part of one of his letters being published, I thought it right to take this opportunity of asking him explicitly whether it would be improper to publish his letters after his

death. His answer was, "Nay, Sir, when I am dead, you may do as you will."

He talked in his usual style with a rough contempt of popular liberty. "They make a rout about *universal* liberty, without considering that all that is to be valued, or indeed can be enjoyed by individuals, is *private* liberty. Political liberty is good only so far as it produces private liberty. Now, Sir, there is the liberty of the press, which you know is a constant topic. Suppose you and I and two hundred more were restrained from printing our thoughts: what then? What proportion would that restraint upon us bear to the private happiness of the nation?"(1)

This mode of representing the inconveniences of restraint as light and insignificant, was a kind of sophistry in which he delighted to indulge himself, in opposition to the extreme laxity for which it has been fashionable for too many to argue, when it is evident, upon reflection, that the very essence of government is restraint; and certain it is, that as government produces rational happiness, too much restraint is better than too little. But when restraint is unnecessary, and so close as to gall those who are subject to it, the people may and ought to remonstrate; and, if relief is not granted, to resist. Of this manly and spirited principle, no man was more convinced than Johnson himself.

About this time Dr. Kenrick attacked him, through

(1) Would Johnson have talked in this way in the days of the *Marmor Norfolciense*? (Vol I. p. 156.) If we lost the liberty of the press, what security could we have for any other right? — C.

my sides, in a pamphlet, entitled "An Epistle to James Boswell, Esq. occasioned by his having transmitted the moral Writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson to Pascal Paoli, General of the Corsicans." I was at first inclined to answer this pamphlet; but Johnson, who knew that my doing so would only gratify Kenrick, by keeping alive what would soon die away of itself, would not suffer me to take any notice of it.(1)

His sincere regard for Francis Barber, his faithful negro servant, made him so desirous of his further improvement, that he now placed him at a school at Bishop Stortford, in Hertfordshire. This humane attention does Johnson's heart much honour. Out of many letters which Mr. Barber received from his master, he has preserved three, which he kindly gave me, and which I shall insert according to their dates.

LETTER 118. TO MR. FRANCIS BARBER. (2)

"May 28. 1768.

"DEAR FRANCIS, — I have been very much out of order. I am glad to hear that you are well, and design

(1) Johnson's silence proceeded not more from his contempt of such an adversary, than from a settled resolution he had formed, of declining all controversy in defence either of himself or of his writings. Against personal abuse he was ever armed, by a reflection that I have heard him utter: — "Alas! reputation would be of little worth, were it in the power of every concealed enemy to deprive us of it;" and he defied all attacks on his writings by an answer of Dr. Bentley to one who threatened to write him down, that "no author was ever written down but by himself." — HAWKINS.

(2) When Mrs. Williams and Francis quarrelled, as was very frequent, the lady would complain to the doctor, adding, "This is your scholar, on whose education you have spent 300l." Dr. Johnson, in the conclusion of the letter, calls him a "boy," but sixteen years had already elapsed since he entered Johnson's own service. — C.

to come soon to you. I would have you stay at Mrs. Clapp's for the present, till I can determine what we shall do. Be a good boy. My compliments to Mrs. Clapp and to Mr. Fowler. I am yours affectionately,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Soon afterwards, he supped at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, with a company whom I collected to meet him. They were, Dr. Percy now Bishop of Dromore, Dr. Douglas now Bishop of Salisbury, Mr. Langton, Dr. Robertson the Historian, Dr. Hugh Blair, and Mr. Thomas Davies, who wished much to be introduced to these eminent Scotch literati; but on the present occasion he had very little opportunity of hearing them talk; for, with an excess of prudence, for which Johnson afterwards found fault with them, they hardly opened their lips, and that only to say something which they were certain would not expose them to the sword of Goliath; such was their anxiety for their fame when in the presence of Johnson. He was this evening in remarkable vigour of mind, and eager to exert himself in conversation, which he did with great readiness and fluency; but I am sorry to find that I have preserved but a small part of what passed.

He allowed high praise to Thomson as a poet; but when one of the company said he was also a very good man, our moralist contested this with great warmth, accusing him of gross sensuality and licentiousness of manners. I was very much afraid that, in writing Thomson's life, Dr. Johnson would have treated his private character with a stern severity,

but I was agreeably disappointed; and I may claim a little merit in it, from my having been at pains to send him authentic accounts of the affectionate and generous conduct of that poet to his sisters, one of whom, the wife of Mr. Thomson, schoolmaster at Lanark, I knew, and was presented by her with three of his letters, one of which Dr. Johnson has inserted in his life.

He was vehement against old Dr. Monsey (1), of Chelsea College, as "a fellow who swore and talked bawdy." "I have been often in his company," said Dr. Percy, "and never heard him swear or talk bawdy." Mr. Davies, who sat next to Dr. Percy, having after this had some conversation aside with him, made a discovery which, in his zeal to pay court to Dr. Johnson, he eagerly proclaimed aloud from the foot of the table: "Oh, Sir, I have found out a

(1) [Messenger Monsey, M.D. was born in Norfolk, in 1693, and died at Chelsea College, Dec. 26. 1788, at the great age of ninety-five. By his will he directed that his body should undergo dissection; after which "the remainder of my carcass may be put into a hole, or crammed into a box with holes, and thrown into the Thames, at the pleasure of the surgeon." His body was accordingly dissected by his *friend*, Mr. Foster, and preparations were deposited in the Museum of St. Thomas's Hospital. In a letter to Mr. Cruickshank, the eminent surgeon, dated May 12. 1787, he says. —

"Mr Thomson Foster, surgeon, in Union Court, Broad Street, has promised to open my carcass and see what is the matter with my heart, arteries, and kidneys. He is gone to Norwich, and may not return before I am [dead]. Will you be so good as to let me send it to you, or, if he comes, will you like to be present at the dissection? Let me see you to-morrow, between eleven and one or two, or any day. I am now very ill, and hardly could scrawl this, and feel as if I should live [but] two days — the sooner the better. I am, though unknown to you, your respectful humble servant, Messenger Monsey."

This letter, the original of which is in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, has been communicated by William Clift, Esq. F.R.S.]

very good reason why Dr. Percy never heard Monsey swear or talk bawdy; for he tells me he never saw him but at the Duke of Northumberland's table." "And so, Sir," said Dr. Johnson loudly to Dr. Percy, "you would shield this man from the charge of swearing and talking bawdy, because he did not do so at the Duke of Northumberland's table. Sir, you might as well tell us that you had seen him hold up his hand at the Old Bailey, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy; or that you had seen him in the cart at Tyburn, and he neither swore nor talked bawdy. And is it thus, Sir, that you presume to controvert what I have related?" Dr. Johnson's animadversion was uttered in such a manner, that Dr. Percy seemed to be displeased, and soon afterwards left the company, of which Johnson did not at that time take any notice.

Swift having been mentioned, Johnson, as usual, treated him with little respect as an author. Some of us endeavoured to support the Dean of St. Patrick's, by various arguments. One, in particular, praised his "Conduct of the Allies." JOHNSON. "Sir, his 'Conduct of the Allies' is a performance of very little ability." "Surely, Sir," said Dr. Douglas, "you must allow it has strong facts." (1) JOHNSON.

(1) My respectable friend, upon reading this passage, observed, that he probably must have said not simply "strong facts," but "strong facts well arranged." His Lordship, however, knows too well the value of written documents to insist on setting his recollection against my notes taken at the time. He does not attempt to *traverse the record*. The fact, perhaps, may have been, either that the additional words escaped me in the noise of a numerous company, or that Dr. Johnson, from

"Why yes, Sir; but what is that to the merit of the composition? In the Sessions-paper of the Old Bailey there are strong facts. Housebreaking is a strong fact; robbery is a strong fact; and murder is a *mighty* strong fact: but is great praise due to the historian of those strong facts? No, Sir, Swift has told what he had to tell distinctly enough, but that is all. He had to count ten, and he has counted it right." Then recollecting that Mr. Davies, by acting as an *informer*, had been the occasion of his talking somewhat too harshly to his friend Dr. Percy, for which, probably, when the first ebullition was over, he felt some compunction, he took an opportunity to give him a hit: so added, with a preparatory laugh, "Why, Sir, Tom Davies might have written 'The Conduct of the Allies.'" Poor Tom being thus suddenly dragged into ludicrous notice in presence of the Scottish doctors, to whom he was ambitious of appearing to advantage, was grievously mortified. Nor did his punishment rest here; for upon subsequent occasions, whenever he, "statesman all over (1)," assumed a strutting importance, I used to hail him—"*the Author of the Conduct of the Allies.*"

When I called upon Dr. Johnson next morning, I found him highly satisfied with his colloquial prowess the preceding evening. "Well," said he, "we had good talk." BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir; you tossed and gored several persons."

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his impetuosity, and eagerness to seize an opportunity to make a lively retort, did not allow Dr. Douglas to finish his sentence.

(1) See the hard drawing of him in Churchill's "Rosciad."

The late Alexander Earl of Eglintoune (1), who loved wit more than wine, and men of genius more than sycophants, had a great admiration of Johnson; but, from the remarkable elegance of his own manners, was, perhaps, too delicately sensible of the roughness which sometimes appeared in Johnson's behaviour. One evening about this time, when his lordship did me the honour to sup at my lodgings with Dr. Robertson and several other men of literary distinction, he regretted that Johnson had not been educated with more refinement, and lived more in polished society. "No, no, my lord," said Signor Baretti, "do with him what you would, he would always have been a bear." "True," answered the earl, with a smile, "but he would have been a *dancing* bear."

To obviate all the reflections which have gone round the world to Johnson's prejudice, by applying to him the epithet of a *bear*, let me impress upon my readers a just and happy saying of my friend Goldsmith, who knew him well:—"Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin.*" (2)

(1) Tenth earl, who was shot, in 1769, by Mungo Campbell, whose fowling-piece Lord Eglintoune attempted to seize. To this nobleman Boswell was indebted, as he himself said, for his early introduction to the circle of the great, the gay, and the ingenious. Boswell thus mentions himself in a tale called "The Cub at Newmarket," published in 1762:—

"Lord Eglintoune, who loves, you know,
A little dish of whim or so,
By chance a curious cub had got,
On Scotia's mountains newly caught."—Gent. Mag. 1795.—C.

(2) It was drolly said, in reference to the pensions granted to Doctors Shebbeare and Johnson, that the King had pensioned a *She-bear* and a *He-bear*.—C.

LETTER 113. TO F. A. BARNARD, ESQ.(1)

"May 28. 1768.

"SIR, — It is natural for a scholar to interest himself in an expedition, undertaken, like yours, for the importation of literature; and therefore, though, having never travelled myself, I am very little qualified to give advice to a traveller; yet, that I may not seem inattentive to a design so worthy of regard, I will try whether the present state of my health will suffer me to lay before you what observation or report have suggested to me, that may direct your inquiries, or facilitate your success. Things of which the mere rarity makes the value, and which are prised at a high rate by a wantonness rather than by use, are always passing from poorer to richer countries; and therefore, though Germany and Italy were principally productive of typographical curiosities, I do not much imagine that they are now to be found there in great abundance. An eagerness for scarce books and early editions, which prevailed among the English about half a century ago, filled our shops with all the splendour and nicety of literature; and when the Harleian Catalogue was published, many of the books were bought for the library of the King of France.

"I believe, however, that by the diligence with which you have enlarged the library under your care, the present stock is so nearly exhausted, that, till new purchases supply the booksellers with new stores, you will not be able to do much more than glean up single books, as accident shall produce them; this, therefore, is the time for visiting the continent.

"What addition you can hope to make by ransacking other countries we will now consider. English literature you will not seek in any place but in England. Classical learning is diffused every where, and is not,

(1) [Mr., afterwards Sir Francis, Barnard was Librarian to King George III. See antè, p. 19.]

except by accident, more copious in one part of the polite world than in another. But every country has literature of its own, which may be best gathered in its native soil. The studies of the learned are influenced by forms of government and modes of religion; and, therefore, those books are necessary and common in some places, which, where different opinions or different manners prevail, are of little use, and for that reason rarely to be found.

"Thus in Italy you may expect to meet with canonists and scholastic divines, in Germany with writers on the feudal laws, and in Holland with civilians. The schoolmen and canonists must not be neglected, for they are useful to many purposes; nor too anxiously sought, for their influence among us is much lessened by the Reformation. Of the canonists at least a few eminent writers may be sufficient. The schoolmen are of more general value. But the feudal and civil law I cannot but wish to see complete. The feudal constitution is the original of the law of property, over all the civilised part of Europe; and the civil law, as it is generally understood to include the law of nations, may be called with great propriety a regal study. Of these books, which have been often published, and diversified by various modes of impression, a royal library should have at least the most curious edition, the most splendid, and the most useful. The most curious edition is commonly the first, and the most useful may be expected among the last. Thus, of Tully's Offices, the edition of Fust is the most curious, and that of Grævius the most useful. The most splendid the eye will discern. With the old printers you are now become well acquainted; if you can find any collection of their productions to be sold, you will undoubtedly buy it; but this can scarcely be hoped, and you must catch up single volumes where you can find them. In every place things often occur where they are least expected. I was shown a Welsh grammar

written in Welsh, and printed at Milan, I believe, before any grammar of that language had been printed here. Of purchasing entire libraries, I know not whether the inconvenience may not overbalance the advantage. Of libraries connected with general views, one will have many books in common with another. When you have bought two collections, you will find that you have bought many books twice over, and many in each which you have left at home, and, therefore, did not want; and when you have selected a small number, you will have the rest to sell at a great loss, or to transport further at perhaps a greater. It will generally be more commodious to buy the few that you want, at a price somewhat advanced, than to encumber yourself with useless books. But libraries collected for particular studies will be very valuable acquisitions. The collection of an eminent civilian, feudist, or mathematician, will perhaps have very few superfluities. Topography or local history prevails much in many parts of the continent. I have been told that scarcely a village of Italy wants its historian. These books may be generally neglected, but some will deserve attention by the celebrity of the place, the eminence of the authors, or the beauty of the sculptures. Sculpture has always been more cultivated among other nations than among us. The old art of cutting on wood, which decorated the books of ancient impression, was never carried here to any excellence; and the practice of engraving on copper, which succeeded, has never been much employed among us in adorning books. The old books with wooden cuts are to be diligently sought; the designs were often made by great masters, and the prints are such as cannot be made by any artist now living. It will be of great use to collect in every place maps of the adjacent country, and plans of towns, buildings, and gardens. By this care you will form a more valuable body of geography than can otherwise be had. Many countries have been very exactly

surveyed, but it must not be expected that the exactness of actual mensuration will be preserved, when the maps are reduced by a contracted scale, and incorporated into a general system.

"The king of Sardinia's Italian dominions are not large, yet the maps made of them in the reign of Victor fill two Atlantic folios. This part of your design will deserve particular regard, because, in this, your success will always be proportioned to your diligence. You are too well acquainted with literary history not to know, that many books derive their value from the reputation of the printers. Of the celebrated printers you do not need to be informed, and if you did, might consult Baillet, Jugemens des Sçavans. The productions of Aldus are enumerated in the Bibliotheca Græca, so that you may know when you have them all; which is always of use, as it prevents needless search. The great ornaments of a library, furnished for magnificence as well as use, are the first editions, of which, therefore, I would not willingly neglect the mention. You know, sir, that the annals of typography begin with the Codex, 1457; but there is great reason to believe, that there are latent, in obscure corners, books printed before it. The secular feast, in memory of the invention of printing, is celebrated in the fortieth year of the century; if this tradition, therefore, is right, the art had in 1457 been already exercised nineteen years.

"There prevails among typographical antiquaries a vague opinion, that the Bible had been printed three times before the edition of 1462, which Calmet calls 'La première édition bien avérée.' One of these editions has been lately discovered in a convent, and transplanted into the French king's library. Another copy has likewise been found, but I know not whether of the same impression, or another. These discoveries are sufficient to raise hope and instigate inquiry. In the purchase of old books, let me recommend to you to inquire with

great caution, whether they are perfect. In the first edition the loss of a leaf is not easily observed. You remember how near we both were to purchasing a mutilated Missal at a high price.

"All this perhaps you know already, and, therefore, my letter may be of no use. I am, however, desirous to show you, that I wish prosperity to your undertaking. One advice more I will give, of more importance than all the rest, of which I, therefore, hope you will have still less need. You are going into a part of the world divided, as it is said, between bigotry and atheism: such representations are always hyperbolical, but there is certainly enough of both to alarm any mind solicitous for piety and truth; let not the contempt of superstition precipitate you into infidelity, or the horror of infidelity ensnare you in superstition. — I sincerely wish you successful and happy, for I am, Sir, &c.

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 114. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"June 18. 1768.

"My Love, — It gives me great pleasure to find that you are so well satisfied with what little things it has been in my power to send you. I hope you will always employ me in any office that can conduce to your convenience. My health is, I thank God, much better; but it is yet very weak; and very little things put it into a troublesome state; but still I hope all will be well. Pray for me.

"My friends at Lichfield must not think that I forget them. Neither Mrs. Cobb, nor Mrs. Adey nor Miss Adey, nor Miss Seward, nor Miss Vise, are to suppose that I have lost all memory of their kindness. Mention me to them when you see them. I hear Mr. Vise has been lately very much in danger. I hope he is better.

"When you write again, let me know how you go on, and what company you keep, and what you do all day. I love to think on you, but do not know when I shall see you. Pray, write very often. I am, dearest, your humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

In 1769, so far as I can discover, the public was favoured with nothing of Johnson's composition, either for himself or any of his friends.(1) His "Meditations" too strongly prove that he suffered much both in body and mind; yet was he perpetually striving against *evil*, and nobly endeavouring to advance his intellectual and devotional improvement. Every generous and grateful heart must feel for the distresses of so eminent a benefactor to mankind; and now that his unhappiness is certainly known, must respect that dignity of character which prevented him from complaining.

His Majesty having the preceding year instituted the Royal Academy of Arts in London, Johnson

(1) A difference took place in the March of this year between Mr. Thrale and Sir Joseph Mawbey, his colleague, in the representation of Southwark, when Sir Joseph endeavoured to defend himself from some anti-popular step he had taken, by inculpating Mr. Thrale. The affair is related in the Gentleman's Magazine, and the concluding paragraph seems to contain internal evidence of having been written by Dr. Johnson: —

"If, therefore, delicacy of situation, and *fear of public resentment*, were the motives that impelled Sir Joseph to do his duty against his opinion, let his excuse have its full effect: but when he regrets his cowardice of compliance, let him regret likewise the cowardice of calumny; and when he shrinks from vulgar resentment, let him not employ falsehood to cover his retreat." — Vol. xxxix. p. 102.

The article proceeds to recommend a recurrence to triennial parliaments, a measure to which Johnson's hatred of the Whig septennial bill would naturally incline him; and as, for Mr. Thrale's sake, he was obliged, by the violence of the times, to adopt some popular topic, he would probably adopt that of triennial parliaments. — C.

had now the honour of being appointed Professor in Ancient Literature. (1) In the course of the year he wrote some letters to Mrs. Thrale, passed some part of the summer at Oxford, and at Lichfield, and when at Oxford he wrote the following letter:—

LETTER 115. TO THE REV. MR. THOMAS WARTON.

"May 31. 1769.

"DEAR SIR,—Many years ago, when I used to read in the library of your College, I promised to recompense the college for that permission, by adding to their books a Baskerville's Virgil. I have now sent it, and desire you to reposit it on the shelves in my name. (2)

"If you will be pleased to let me know when you have an hour of leisure, I will drink tea with you. I am engaged for the afternoon, to-morrow, and on Friday: all my mornings are my own. (3) I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) In which place he has been succeeded by Bennet Langton, Esq. When that truly religious gentleman was elected to this honorary Professorship, at the same time that Edward Gibbon, Esq., noted for introducing a kind of sneering infidelity into his historical writings, was elected Professor in Ancient History, in the room of Dr. Goldsmith, I observed that it brought to my mind, "Wicked Will Whiston and good Mr. Ditton." — I am now also [1791] of that admirable institution, as Secretary for Foreign Correspondence, by the favour of the Academicians, and the approbation of the sovereign.

(2) It has this inscription in a blank leaf:—"*Hunc librum D.D. Samuel Johnson eo quod hic loci studiis interdum vacaret.*" Of this library, which is an old Gothic room, he was very fond. On my observing to him that some of the *modern* libraries of the University were more commodious and pleasant for study, as being more spacious and airy, he replied, "Sir, if a man has a mind to *prance*, he must study at Christchurch and all Souls." — WARTON.

(3) During this visit he seldom or never dined out. He appeared to be deeply engaged in some literary work. Miss Williams was now with him at Oxford. — WARTON.

LETTER 116. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Lichfield, August 14. 1769.

"I set out on Thursday morning, and found my companion, to whom I was very much a stranger, more agreeable than I expected. We went cheerfully forward, and passed the night at Coventry. We came in late, and went out early; and therefore I did not send for my cousin Tom, but I design to make him some amends for the omission.

"Next day we came early to Lucy, who was, I believe, glad to see us. She had saved her best gooseberries upon the tree for me; and as Steele says, *I was neither too proud nor too wise* to gather them. I have rambled a very little *inter fontes et flumina nota*, but I am not yet well. They have cut down the trees in George Lane. Evelyn, in his book of Forest Trees (1), tells us of wicked men that cut down trees, and never prospered afterwards; yet nothing has deterred these audacious aldermen from violating the Hamadryad of George Lane. As an impartial traveller, I must, however, tell that, in Stow-street, where I left a draw-well, I have found a pump, but the lading-well in this ill-fated George Lane lies shamefully neglected.

"I am going to-day or to-morrow to Ashbourne; but I am at a loss how I shall get back in time to London. Here are only chance coaches, so that there is no certainty of a place. If I do not come, let it not hinder your journey. I can be but a few days behind you; and I will follow in the Brighthelmstone coach. But I hope to come."

LETTER 117. TO MRS. ASTON.

"Brighthelmstone, August 26. 1769.

"MADAM,—I suppose you have received the mill: the whole apparatus seemed to be perfect, except that

(1) [Historical Account of the Sacredness and Use of Standing Groves, p. 688. 4to. 1776.]

there is wanting a little tin spout at the bottom, and some ring or knob, on which the bag that catches the meal is to be hung. When these are added, I hope you will be able to grind your own bread, and treat me with a cake, made by yourself, of meal from your own corn of your own grinding.

"I was glad, madam, to see you so well, and hope your health will long increase, and then long continue. I am, madam, your most obedient servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I came to London in the autumn; and having informed him that I was going to be married in a few months, I wished to have as much of his conversation as I could before engaging in a state of life which would probably keep me more in Scotland, and prevent me seeing him so often as when I was a single man; but I found he was at Brighthelmstone with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. I was very sorry that I had not his company with me at the Jubilee, in honour of Shakspeare, at Stratford-upon-Avon, the great poet's native town.(1) Johnson's connection both with Shakspeare and Garrick founded a double claim to his presence; and it would have been highly

(1) Mr. Boswell, on this occasion, justified Johnson's foresight and prudence, in advising him to "clear his head of Corsica:" unluckily, the advice had no effect, for Boswell made a fool of himself at the Jubilee by sundry enthusiastic freaks; amongst others, lest he should not be sufficiently distinguished, he wore the words CORSICA BOSWELL in large letters round his hat. — C. 1831. — There was an absurd print of him, I think in the London Magazine, and published, no doubt, with his concurrence, in the character of an armed Corsican chief, as he appeared at the Jubilee, Sept. 1769, (in which he wears a cap with the inscription of "Viva la Libertà!" — but this was his dress of ceremony. The vernacular inscription of *Corsica Boswell* was probably his undress badge. — C. 1835.

gratifying to Mr. Garrick. Upon this occasion I particularly lamented that he had not that warmth of friendship for his brilliant pupil, which we may suppose would have had a benignant effect on both. When almost every man of eminence in the literary world was happy to partake in this festival of genius, the absence of Johnson could not but be wondered at and regretted. The only trace of him there, was in the whimsical advertisement of a haberdasher, who sold *Shakesperian ribands* of various dyes; and, by way of illustrating their appropriation to the bard, introduced a line from the celebrated Prologue, at the opening of Drury Lane theatre: —

"Each change of *many-colour'd* life he drew."

From Brighthelmstone Dr. Johnson wrote me the following letter; which they who may think that I ought to have suppressed, must have less ardent feelings than I have always avowed. (1)

(1) In the Preface to my Account of Corsica, published in 1768, I thus express myself: —

"He who publishes a book, affecting not to be an author, and professing an indifference for literary fame, may possibly impose upon many people such an idea of his consequence as he wishes may be received. For my part, I should be proud to be known as an author, and I have an ardent ambition for literary fame; for, of all possessions, I should imagine literary fame to be the most valuable. A man who has been able to furnish a book, which has been approved by the world, has established himself as a respectable character in distant society, without any danger of having that character lessened by the observation of his weaknesses. To preserve an uniform dignity among those who see us every day, is hardly possible; and to aim at it, must put us under the fetters of perpetual restraint. The author of an approved book may allow his natural disposition an easy play, and yet indulge the pride of superior genius, when he considers that by those who know him only as an author, he never ceases to be respected. Such an author, when in his hours of gloom and discontent, may have the consolation to think, that his writings are, at that very time, giving pleasure to numbers; and such an author may cherish the hope of being remembered after death, which has been a great object to the noblest minds in all ages."

LETTER 118. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Brighthelmstone, Sept. 9, 1769.

"DEAR SIR,—Why do you charge me with unkindness? I have omitted nothing that could do you good, or give you pleasure, unless it be that I have forborne to tell you my opinion of your 'Account of Corsica.' I believe my opinion, if you think well of my judgment, might have given you pleasure; but when it is considered how much vanity is excited by praise, I am not sure that it would have done you good. Your History is like other histories, but your Journal is, in a very high degree, curious and delightful. There is between the history and the journal that difference which there will always be found between notions borrowed from without, and notions generated within. Your history was copied from books; your journal rose out of your own experience and observation. You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers. I know not whether I could name any narrative by which curiosity is better excited, or better gratified.

"I am glad that you are going to be married; and as I wish you well in things of less importance, wish you well with proportionate ardour in this crisis of your life. What I can contribute to your happiness, I should be very unwilling to withhold; for I have always loved and valued you, and shall love you and value you still more, as you become more regular and useful: effects which a happy marriage will hardly fail to produce.

"I do not find that I am likely to come back very soon from this place. I shall, perhaps, stay a fortnight longer; and a fortnight is a long time to a lover absent from his mistress. Would a fortnight ever have an end? I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

CHAPTER III

1769.

General Paoli. — Observance of Sunday. — Rousseau and Monboddo. — Love of Singularity. — London Life. — Artemisias. — Second Marriages. — Scotch Gardening. — Vails. — Prior. — Garrick's Poetry. — History. — Whitfield. — The Corsicans. — Good Breeding. — Fate and Free-will. — Goldsmith's Tailor. — The Dunciad. — Dryden. — Congreve. — Sheridan. — Mrs. Montagu's Essay. — Lord Kames. — Burke. — Ballad of Hardyknute. — Fear of Death. — Sympathy with Distress. — Foote. — Buchanan. — Baretti's Trial. — Mandeville.

After his return to town, we met frequently, and I continued the practice of making notes of his conversation, though not with so much assiduity as I wish I had done. At this time, indeed, I had a sufficient excuse for not being able to appropriate so much time to my journal; for General Paoli (1), after Corsica had been overpowered by the monarchy of France, was now no longer at the head of his brave countrymen; but, having with difficulty escaped from

(1) [In 1755, Pascal Paoli was appointed first magistrate and general of Corsica. He had been educated at Naples, and was a captain in the service of King Don Carlos. He was tall, young, handsome, learned, and eloquent. In 1769, a French army, commanded by Marshal de Vaux, landed in Corsica. The inhabitants fought resolutely; but, driven to the south of the island, Paoli embarked, June 16., in an English ship at Porto-Vecchio, landed at Leghorn, crossed the continent, and repaired to London, where he was every where received with tokens of the greatest admiration, both by the people and their princes. — Napoleon Buonaparte, Mémoires, tom. iv. p. 36.]

his native island, had sought an asylum in Great Britain; and it was my duty, as well as my pleasure, to attend much upon him. Such particulars of Johnson's conversation at this period as I have committed to writing, I shall here introduce, without any strict attention to methodical arrangement. Sometimes short notes of different days shall be blended together, and sometimes a day may seem important enough to be separately distinguished.

He said, he would not have Sunday kept with rigid severity and gloom, but with a gravity and simplicity of behaviour. (1)

I told him that David Hume had made a short collection of Scotticisms. "I wonder," said Johnson, "that *he* should find them." (2)

He would not admit the importance of the question concerning the legality of general warrants. "Such a power," he observed, "must be vested in every government, to answer particular cases of necessity; and there can be no just complaint but when it is abused, for which those who administer government must be answerable. It is a matter of such indifference, a matter about which the people care so very

(1) He ridiculed a friend who, looking out on Streatham Common from our windows one day, lamented the enormous wickedness of the times, because some birdcatchers were busy there one fine Sunday morning. "While half the Christian world is permitted," said he, "to dance and sing, and celebrate Sunday as a day of festivity, how comes your puritanical spirit so offended with frivolous and empty deviations from exactness? Whoever loads life with unnecessary scruples, Sir," continued he, "provokes the attention of others on his conduct, and incurs the censure of singularity without reaping the reward of superior virtue." — Piozzi.

(2) The first edition of Hume's History of England was full of Scotticisms, many of which he corrected in subsequent editions. — M.

little, that were a man to be sent over Britain to offer them an exemption from it at a halfpenny a piece, very few would purchase it." This was a specimen of that laxity of talking, which I had heard him fairly acknowledge; for, surely, while the power of granting general warrants was supposed to be legal, and the apprehension of them hung over our heads, we did not possess that security of freedom, congenial to our happy constitution, and which, by the intrepid exertions of Mr. Wilkes, has been happily established.

He said, "The duration of parliament, whether for seven years or the life of the king, appears to me so immaterial, that I would not give half a crown to turn the scale one way or the other. The *habeas corpus* is the single advantage which our government has over that of other countries." (1)

On the 30th of September we dined together at the Mitre. I attempted to argue for the superior happiness of the savage life, upon the usual fanciful topics. JOHNSON. "Sir, there can be nothing more false. The savages have no bodily advantages beyond those of civilised men. They have not better health; and as to care or mental uneasiness, they are not above it, but below it, like bears. No, Sir; you are not to talk such paradox: let me have no more on't. It cannot entertain, far less can it instruct. Lord Monboddo, one of your Scotch judges, talked a great deal of such nonsense. I suffered *him*; but I will not suffer *you*." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, does

(1) Did he reckon the power of the Commons over the public purse as nothing? and did he calculate how long the *habeas corpus* might exist, if the freedom of the press were destroyed, and the duration of parliaments unlimited? — C.

not Rousseau talk such nonsense?" JOHNSON. "True, Sir; but Rousseau *knows* he is talking nonsense, and laughs at the world for staring at him." BOSWELL. "How so, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, a man who talks nonsense so well, must know that he is talking nonsense. But I am *afraid* (chuckling and laughing), Monboddo does *not* know that he is talking nonsense."(1) BOSWELL. "Is it wrong then, Sir, to affect singularity, in order to make people stare?" JOHNSON. "Yes, if you do it by propagating errors and, indeed, it is wrong in any way. There is in human nature a general inclination to make people stare; and every wise man has himself to cure of it, and does cure himself. If you wish to make people stare, by doing better than others, why, make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare, by being absurd. I may do it by going into a drawing-room without my shoes. You remember the gentleman in 'The Spectator' [No. 576.] who had a commission of lunacy taken out against him for his extreme singularity, such as never wearing a wig, but a night-cap. Now Sir, abstractedly, the night-cap was best: but, relatively, the advantage was over balanced by his making the boys run after him."(2)

(1) His lordship having frequently spoken in an abusive manner of Dr. Johnson, in my company, I, on one occasion, during the lifetime of my illustrious friend, could not refrain from retaliation, and repeated to him this saying. He has since published I don't know how many pages in one of his curious books, attempting, in much anger, but with pitiful effect, to persuade mankind that my illustrious friend was not the great and good man which they esteemed and ever will esteem him to be.

(2) *Few people had a more settled reverence for the world than Dr. Johnson, or were less captivated by innovations on*

Talking of a London life, he said, "The happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I will venture to say, there is more learning and science within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit, than in all the rest of the kingdom." BOSWELL. "The only disadvantage is the great distance at which people live from one another." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but that is occasioned by the largeness of it, which is the cause of all the other advantages." BOSWELL. "Sometimes I have been in the humour of wishing to retire to a desert." JOHNSON. "Sir, you have desert enough in Scotland."

Although I had promised myself a great deal of

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the long-received customs of common life. We met a friend driving six very small ponies, and stopped to admire them. "Why does nobody," said our Doctor, "begin the fashion of driving six spavined horses, all spavined of the same leg? it would have a mighty pretty effect, and produce the distinction of doing something worse than the common way." He hated the way of leaving a company without taking notice to the lady of the house that he was going, and did not much like any of the contrivances by which ease has been lately introduced into society instead of ceremony, which had more of his approbation. Cards, dress, and dancing, however, all found their advocates in Dr. Johnson, who inculcated, upon principle, the cultivation of those arts, which many a moralist thinks himself bound to reject, and many a Christian holds unfit to be practised. "No person," said he, one day, "goes under-dressed till he thinks himself of consequence enough to forbear carrying the badge of his rank upon his back." And, in answer to the arguments urged by Puritans, Quakers, &c. against showy decorations of the human figure, I once heard him exclaim, "Oh, let us not be found, when our Master calls us, ripping the lace off our waistcoats, but the spirit of contention from our souls and tongues! Let us all conform in outward customs, which are of no consequence, to the manners of those whom we live among, and despise such paltry distinctions. Alas! Sir," continued he, "a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat, will not find his way thither the sooner in a grey one."—PIOZZI.

instructive conversation with him on the conduct of the married state, of which I had then a near prospect, he did not say much upon that topic. Mr. Seward(1) heard him once say, that "a man has a very bad chance for happiness in that state, unless he marries a woman of very strong and fixed principles of religion." He maintained to me, contrary to the common notion, that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned; in which, from all that I have observed of *Artemisias* (2), I humbly differed from him. That a woman should be sensible and well informed, I allow to be a great advantage; and think that Sir Thomas Overbury, in his rude versification, has very judiciously pointed out that degree of intelligence which is to be desired in a female companion: —

"Give me, next *good*, an *understanding wife*,
By nature *wise*, not *learned* by much art;
Some *knowledge* on her side will all my life
More scope of conversation impart;
Besides, her inborne virtue fortifie;
They are most firmly good, who best know why." (3)

(1) William Seward, Esq. F.R.S., editor of "Anecdotes of some Distinguished Persons," &c. in four volumes, 8vo, well known to a numerous and valuable acquaintance for his literature, love of the fine arts, and social virtues. I am indebted to him for several communications concerning Johnson. — B. — [Mr. Seward was born in London in 1747, the son of a wealthy brewer, partner in the house of Calvert and Seward. He was educated at the Charter House and at Oxford, and died, April 24. 1799. Besides the "Anecdotes," he published "Biographiana," and "Literary Miscellanies."]

(2) ["Though *Artemisia* talks, by fits,
Of councils, classics, fathers, wits;
Reads Malbranche, Boyle, and Locke:
Yet in some things methinks she fails;
'T were well if she would pare her nails,
And wear a cleaner smock." — POPE.]

(3) "A Wife," a poem, 1614.

When I censured a gentleman of my acquaintance for marrying a second time, as it shewed a disregard of his first wife, he said, "Not at all, Sir. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife he pays the highest compliment to the first, by shewing that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time." So ingenious a turn did he give to this delicate question. And yet, on another occasion, he owned that he once had almost asked a promise of Mrs. Johnson that she would not marry again, but had checked himself. Indeed I cannot help thinking, that in his case the request would have been unreasonable; for if Mrs. Johnson forgot, or thought it no injury to the memory of her first love — the husband of her youth and the father of her children — to make a second marriage, why should she be precluded from a third, should she be so inclined? In Johnson's persevering fond appropriation of his *Tetty*, even after her decease, he seems totally to have overlooked the prior claim of the honest Birmingham trader. (1) I presume that her having been married before had, at times, given him some uneasiness; for I remember his observing upon the marriage of one of our common friends, "He has done a very foolish thing, Sir; he has married a widow, when he might have had a maid."

(1) Yet his inquisitive mind might have been struck by his friend Hervey's startling application of the scriptural question to Sir Thomas Hanmer, relative to the lady who was the cause of their contention: — "*In heaven, whose wife shall she be?*" See *ante*, p. 18. — C.

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams. I had last year the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Thrale at Dr. Johnson's one morning, and had conversation enough with her to admire her talents; and to shew her that I was as Johnsonian as herself. Dr. Johnson had probably been kind enough to speak well of me, for this evening he delivered me a very polite card from Mr. Thrale and her, inviting me to Streatham.

On the 6th of October I complied with this obliging invitation; and found, at an elegant villa, six miles from town, every circumstance that can make society pleasing. Johnson, though quite at home, was yet looked up to with an awe, tempered by affection, and seemed to be equally the care of his host and hostess. I rejoiced at seeing him so happy.

He played off his wit against Scotland with a good-humoured pleasantry, which gave me, though no bigot to national prejudices, an opportunity for a little contest with him. I having said that England was obliged to us for gardeners, almost all their good gardeners being Scotchmen: — JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that is because gardening is much more necessary amongst you than with us, which makes so many of your people learn it. It is *all* gardening with you. Things which grow wild here, must be cultivated with great care in Scotland. Pray now (throwing himself back in his chair, and laughing), are you ever able to bring the *sloe* to perfection?"

I boasted that we had the honour of being the first to abolish the unhospitable, troublesome, and ungracious custom of giving vails to servants.

JOHNSON. "Sir, you abolished vails, because you were too poor to be able to give them."

Mrs. Thrale disputed with him on the merit o Prior. He attacked him powerfully; said he wrote of love like a man who had never felt it; his love verses were college verses: and he repeated the song, "Alexis shunn'd his fellow swains," &c. in so ludicrous a manner, as to make us all wonder how any one could have been pleased with such fantastical stuff. Mrs. Thrale stood to her gun with great courage, in defence of amorous ditties, which Johnson despised, till he at last silenced her by saying, "My dear lady, talk no more of this. Nonsense can be defended but by nonsense."

Mrs. Thrale then praised Garrick's talents for light gay poetry; and, as a specimen, repeated his song in "Florizel and Perdita," and dwelt with peculiar pleasure on this line: —

"I'd smile with the simple, and feed with the poor."

JOHNSON. "Nay, my dear lady, this will never do. Poor David! Smile with the simple! — what folly is that? And who would feed with the poor that can help it? No, no; let me smile with the wise, and feed with the rich." I repeated this sally to Garrick, and wondered to find his sensibility as a writer not a little irritated by it. To soothe him, I observed, that Johnson spared none of us; and I quoted the passage in Horace, in which he compares one who attacks his friends for the sake of a laugh to a pushing ox, that is marked by a bunch of hay put upon his horns; *fœnum habet in cornu.*" "Ay," said Garrick, vehemently, "he has a whole *mow* of it."

Talking of history, Johnson said, "We may know historical facts to be true, as we may know facts in common life to be true. Motives are generally unknown. (1) We cannot trust to the characters we find in history, unless when they are drawn by those who knew the persons; as those, for instance, by Sallust and by Lord Clarendon."

He would not allow much merit to Whitfield's oratory. "His popularity, Sir," said he, "is chiefly owing to the peculiarity of his manner. He would be followed by crowds were he to wear a night-cap in the pulpit, or were he to preach from a tree."

I know not from what spirit of contradiction he burst out into a violent declamation against the Corsicans, of whose heroism I talked in high terms. "Sir," said he, "what is all this rout about the Corsicans? They have been at war with the Genoese for upwards of twenty years, and have never yet taken their fortified towns. They might have battered down their walls, and reduced them to powder in twenty years. They might have pulled the walls in pieces, and cracked the stones with their teeth in twenty years." It was in vain to argue with him upon the want of artillery: he was not to be resisted for the moment.

On the evening of October 10. I presented Dr.

(1) This was what old Sir Robert Walpole probably meant, when his son Horace, wishing to amuse him one evening, after his fall, offered to read him some historical work. "Any thing," said the old statesman, "but history — that *must* be false." Mr. Gibbon says, "Malheureux sort de l'histoire! Les spectateurs sont trop peu instruits, et les acteurs trop intéressés, pour que nous puissions compter sur les récits des uns ou des autres!" (Misc. Works, vol. iv. p. 410.) — C.

Johnson to General Paoli. I had greatly wished that two men, for whom I had the highest esteem, should meet. (1) They met with a manly ease, mutually conscious of their own abilities, and of the abilities of each other. The General spoke Italian, and Dr. Johnson English, and understood one another very well, with a little aid of interpretation from me, in which I compared myself to an isthmus which joins two great continents. Upon Johnson's approach, the General said, "From what I have read of your works, Sir, and from what Mr. Boswell has told me of you, I have long held you in great veneration." The General talked of languages being formed on the particular notions and manners of a people, without knowing which, we cannot know the language. We may know the direct signification of single words; but by these no beauty of expression, no sally of genius, no wit is conveyed to the mind. All this must be by allusion to other ideas. "Sir," said Johnson, "you talk of language, as if you had never done any thing else but study it, instead of governing a nation." The General said, "*Questo è un troppo gran complimento*;" this is too great a compliment. Johnson answered, "I should have thought so, Sir, if I had not heard you talk." (2) The General

(1) [Boswell in his "Journey to Corsica," published in 1768, p. 336., had anticipated this meeting, with apparent satisfaction: — "What an idea," he observes, "may we not form of an interview between such a scholar and philosopher as Mr. Johnson and such a legislator and general as Paoli!" — MARKLAND.]

(2) See *antè*, p. 22., the compliment of King George the Third to himself. — C.

asked him what he thought of the spirit of infidelity which was so prevalent. JOHNSON. "Sir, this gloom of infidelity, I hope, is only a transient cloud passing through the hemisphere, which will soon be dissipated, and the sun break forth with his usual splendour." "You think then," said the General, "that they will change their principles like their clothes." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if they bestow no more thought on principles than on dress, it must be so." The General said, that "a great part of the fashionable infidelity was owing to a desire of showing courage. Men who have no opportunities of showing it as to things in this life, take death and futurity as objects on which to display it." JOHNSON. "That is mighty foolish affectation. Fear is one of the passions of human nature, of which it is impossible to divest it. You remember that the Emperor Charles V., when he read upon the tomb-stone of a Spanish nobleman, 'Here lies one who never knew fear,' wittily said, 'Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers.'"

He talked a few words of French to the General; but finding he did not do it with facility, he asked for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following note: —

"*J'ai lu dans la géographie de Lucas de Linda un Pater-noster écrit dans une langue tout-à-fait différente de l'Italienne, et de toutes autres lesquelles se dérivent du Latin. L'auteur l'appelle* linguam Corsicæ rusticam: *elle a peut-être passé, peu à peu; mais elle a certainement prévalue autrefois dans les montagnes et dans la campagne. Le même auteur dit la même chose en parlant de Sardaigne; qu'il y a deux langues dans l'Isle, une des villes* ' *utre de la campagne.*"

The General immediately informed him, that the *lingua rustica* was only in Sardinia. (1)

Dr. Johnson went home with me, and drank tea till late in the night. He said, "General Paoli had the loftiest port of any man he had ever seen." He denied that military men were always the best bred men. "Perfect good breeding," he observed, "consists in having no particular mark of any profession, but a general elegance of manners; whereas, in a military man, you can commonly distinguish the *brand* of a soldier, *l'homme-d'epée*." (2)

Dr. Johnson shunned to-night any discussion of the perplexed question of fate and free-will, which I attempted to agitate: "Sir," said he, "we *know* our will is free, and *there*'s an end on't.

He honoured me with his company at dinner on the 16th of October, at my lodgings in Old Bond Street, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Garrick,

(1) Is it not possible that a military colony of Jews, transported into Sardinia in the time of Tiberius, may have left some traces of their language there? Tac. An. l. 2. c. 85. Suet. vit. Tib. c. 36. Joseph. l. 18. c. 3. — ELRINGTON. — [Sardinia had been, many ages earlier, colonised by Carthage, whose language was near akin to the Hebrew.—J. G. L.]

(2) It was, Mr. Johnson said, the essence of a gentleman's character to bear the visible mark of no profession whatever. He once named Mr. Berenger as the standard of true elegance; but some one objecting, that he too much resembled the gentleman in Congreve's comedies, Mr. Johnson said, "We must fix then upon the famous Thomas Hervey, whose manners were polished even to acuteness and brilliancy, though he lost but little in solid power of reasoning, and in genuine force of mind." Mr. Johnson had, however, an avowed and scarcely limited partiality for all who bore the name, or boasted the alliance of an Aston or a Hervey. — PIOZZI. — [Richard Berenger was Gentleman of the Horse to George III., and author of the "History and Art of Horsemanship." He died Sept. 9. 1782, aged 62.]

Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Bickerstaff(1) and Mr. Thomas Davies. Garrick played round him with a fond vivacity, taking hold of the breasts of his coat, and, looking up in his face with a lively archness, complimented him on the good health which he seemed then to enjoy; while the sage, shaking his head, beheld him with a gentle complacency. One of the company not being come at the appointed hour, I proposed, as usual upon such occasions, to order dinner to be served; adding, "Ought six people to be kept waiting for one?" "Why, yes," answered Johnson, with a delicate humanity, "if the one will suffer more by your sitting down, than the six will do by waiting." Goldsmith, to divert the tedious minutes, strutted about, bragging of his dress, and I believe was seriously vain of it, for his mind was wonderfully prone to such impressions. "Come, come," said Garrick, "talk no more of that. You are, perhaps, the worst—eh, eh!"—Goldsmith was eagerly attempting to interrupt him, when Garrick went on, laughing ironically, "Nay, you will always *look* like a gentleman; but I am talking of being well or *ill drest*." "Well, let me tell you," said Goldsmith,

(1) Isaac Bickerstaff, a native of Ireland, the author of "Love in a Village," "Lionel and Clarissa," the "Spoiled Child," and several other theatrical pieces of considerable merit and continued popularity. This unhappy man was obliged to fly the country, on suspicion of a capital crime, on which occasion Mrs. Piozzi relates, that "when Mr. Bickerstaff's flight confirmed the report of his guilt, and Mr. Thrale said, in answer to Johnson's astonishment, that he had long been a suspected man, 'By those who look close to the ground dirt will be seen, Sir,' was the lofty reply: 'I hope I see things from a greater distance.'" Piozzi, p. 130. — C.

"when my tailor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said, 'Sir, I have a favour to beg of you. When any body asks you who made your clothes, be pleased to mention John Filby, at the Harrow, in Water Lane.' JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour."

After dinner our conversation first turned upon Pope. Johnson said, his characters of men were admirably drawn, those of women not so well. He repeated to us, in his forcible, melodious manner, the concluding lines of the Dunciad. (1) While he was talking loudly in praise of those lines, one of the company ventured to say, "Too fine for such a poem: — a poem on what?" JOHNSON (with a disdainful look), "Why, on *dunces*. It was worth while being a dunce then. Ah, Sir, hadst *thou* lived in those days! (2) It is not worth

(1) ["Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And universal darkness buries all."]

Mr. Langton informed me that he once related to Johnson (on the authority of Spence) that Pope himself admired those lines so much, that when he repeated them his voice faltered: "And well it might, Sir," said Johnson, "for they are noble lines." — J. BOSWELL, jun.

(2) [Boswell once lamented that he had not lived in the Augustan age of England, when Pope and others flourished. Sir Joshua Reynolds thought that Boswell had no right to complain, as it were better to be alive than dead. Johnson said, 'No, Sir, Boswell is in the right; as, perhaps, he has lost the opportunity of having his name immortalised in the Dunciad. — NORTHCOTE'S Life of Reynolds, vol. ii. p. 189.]

while being a dunce now, when there are no wits." Bickerstaff observed, as a peculiar circumstance, that Pope's fame was higher when he was alive than it was then. Johnson said, his Pastorals were poor things, though the versification was fine. He told us, with high satisfaction, the anecdote of Pope's inquiring who was the author of his "London," and saying, he will be soon *deterré*. He observed, that in Dryden's poetry there were passages drawn from a profundity which Pope could never reach. He repeated some fine lines on love, by the former, which I have now forgotten (1), and gave great applause to the character of Zimri. (2) Goldsmith said, that Pope's character of Addison shewed a deep knowledge of the human heart. Johnson said, that the description of the temple, in "The Mourn-

(1) No doubt one of the many splendid passages on the subject of love in Dryden's Fables; probably that which Johnson quotes in the "Life of Dryden," though it is by no means the most beautiful that might be selected."—C.

["Love various minds does variously inspire,
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,
Like that of incense on the altar laid;
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade;
A fire which every windy passion blows,
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows."]

(2) The Duke of Buckingham, in "Absalom and Achitophel:"—C.

["A man so various that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was every thing by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon,
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking."]

ing Bride," (1) was the finest poetical passage he had ever read; he recollected none in Shakspeare equal to it. — "But," said Garrick, all alarmed for "the God of his idolatry," "we know not the extent and variety of his powers. We are to suppose there are such passages in his works. Shakspeare must not suffer from the badness of our memories." Johnson, diverted by this enthusiastic jealousy, went on with great ardour: "No, Sir; Congreve has *nature*" (smiling on the tragick eagerness of Garrick); but composing himself, he added, "Sir, this is not comparing Congreve on the whole with Shakspeare on the whole; but only maintaining that Congreve has one finer passage than any that can be found in Shakspeare. Sir, a man may have no more than ten guineas in the world, but he may have those ten guineas in one piece; and so may have a finer piece than a man who has ten thousand pound: but then he has only one ten-guinea piece. —What I mean is, that you can shew me no passage where there is simply a description of material objects, without any intermixture of moral notions (2), which

(1) ["How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and pond'rous roof,
By its own weight made stedfast and unmoveable,
Looking tranquillity! — It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight. The tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chilness to my trembling heart!"
Act ii. sc. 1.]

(2) In Congreve's description there seems to be *an intermixture of moral notions*; as the affecting power of the passage arises from the vivid impression of the described objects on the mind of the speaker; "And shoot a chilness," &c.—KEARNEY.

produces such an effect." Mr. Murphy mentioned Shakspeare's description of the night before the battle of Agincourt; but it was observed it had *men* in it. Mr. Davies suggested the speech of Juliet, in which she figures herself awaking in the tomb of her ancestors. Some one mentioned the description of Dover Cliff. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; it should be all precipice, — all vacuum. The crows impede your fall. The diminished appearance of the boats, and other circumstances, are all very good description; but do not impress the mind at once with the horrible idea of immense height. The impression is divided; you pass on by computation, from one stage of the tremendous space to another. Had the girl in 'The Mourning Bride' said, she could not cast her shoe to the top of one of the pillars in the temple, it would not have aided the idea, but weakened it." (1)

Talking of a barrister who had a bad utterance, some one (to rouse Johnson), wickedly said, that he was unfortunate in not having been taught oratory by Sheridan. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, if he had been taught by Sheridan, he would have cleared the room." GARRICK. "Sheridan has too much vanity to be a good man."—We shall now see Johnson's mode of *defending* a man; taking him into his own

(1) Mr. Johnson told me, how he used to tease Garrick by commendations on the tomb scene in Congreve's "Mourning Bride," protesting that Shakspeare had, in the same line of excellence, nothing as good. "All which is strictly true," he would add; "but that is no reason for supposing that Congreve is to stand in competition with Shakspeare: these fellows know not how to blame, or how to commend."— PIOZZI.

hands, and discriminating. JOHNSON. "No, Sir. There is, to be sure, in Sheridan, something to reprehend and every thing to laugh at; but, Sir, he is not a bad man. No, Sir; were mankind to be divided into good and bad, he would stand considerably within the ranks of good. And, Sir, it must be allowed that Sheridan excels in plain declamation, though he can exhibit no character."

I should, perhaps, have suppressed this disquisition concerning a person of whose merit and worth I think with respect, had he not attacked Johnson so outrageously in his Life of Swift, and, at the same time, treated us his admirers as a set of pigmies.(1) He who has provoked the lash of wit, cannot complain that he smarts from it.

Mrs. Montagu, a lady distinguished for having written an Essay on Shakspeare, being mentioned:—REYNOLDS. "I think that essay does her honour." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; it does *her* honour, but it would do nobody else honour. I have, indeed, not read it all. But when I take up the end of a web, and find it packthread, I do not expect, by looking further, to find embroidery. Sir, I will venture to say, there is not one sentence of true criticism in her book." GARRICK. "But, Sir, surely it shows how much Voltaire has mistaken Shakspeare, which nobody else has done." JOHNSON. "Sir, nobody else has thought it worth while. And what merit is there

(1) ["There is a writer, at present of gigantic fame in these days of *little men*, who has pretended to scratch out a Life of Swift, but so miserably executed as only to reflect back on himself that disgrace, which he meant to throw upon the character of the Dean."—SHERIDAN.]

in that? You may as well praise a schoolmaster for whipping a boy who has construed ill. No, Sir, there is no real criticism in it: none showing the beauty of thought, as formed on the workings of the human heart."

The admirers of this Essay (1) may be offended at the slighting manner in which Johnson spoke of it: but let it be remembered, that he gave his honest opinion unbiassed by any prejudice, or any proud jealousy of a woman intruding herself into the chair of criticism; for Sir Joshua Reynolds has told me, that when the Essay first came out, and it was not known who had written it, Johnson wondered how Sir Joshua could like it. At this time Sir Joshua himself had received no information concerning the author, except being assured by one of our most eminent literati, that it was clear its author did not know the Greek tragedies in the original. One day at Sir Joshua's table, when it was related that Mrs. Montagu, in an excess of compliment to the author of a modern tragedy (2), had exclaimed, "I tremble for Shakspeare," Johnson said, "When Shakspeare

(1) Of whom I acknowledge myself to be one, considering it as a piece of the secondary or comparative species of criticism; and not of that profound species which alone Dr. Johnson would allow to be "real criticism." It is, besides, clearly and elegantly expressed, and has done effectually what it professed to do, namely, vindicated Shakspeare from the misrepresentations of Voltaire; and considering how many young people were misled by his witty, though false observations, Mrs. Montagu's Essay was of service to Shakspeare with a certain class of readers, and is, therefore, entitled to praise. Johnson, I am assured, allowed this merit which I have stated, saying (with reference to Voltaire), "It is conclusive ad hominem."

(2) Probably Mr. Jephson, the author of "Braganza." — C.

has got —— for his rival, and Mrs. Montagu for his defender, he is in a poor state indeed." (1)

Johnson proceeded: "The Scotchman has taken the right method in his 'Elements of Criticism.' I do not mean that he has taught us any thing; but he has told us old things in a new way." MURPHY "He seems to have read a great deal of French criticism, and wants to make it his own; as if he had been for years anatomising the heart of man, and peeping into every cranny of it." GOLDSMITH. "It is easier to write that book, than to read it." JOHNSON. "We have an example of true criticism in Burke's 'Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful;' and, if I recollect, there is also Du Bos (2); and Bouhours (3), who shews all beauty to depend on truth. There is no great merit in telling how many plays have ghosts in them, and how this ghost is better than that. You must shew how terror is impressed on the human heart. In the description of night in

(1) And yet when Mrs. Montagu showed him some China plates which had once belonged to Queen Elizabeth, he told her, "that they had no reason to be ashamed of their present possessor, who was so little inferior to the first." — PIOZZI

It has been generally supposed, that the coolness between Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Johnson arose out of his treatment of Lord Lyttelton, in the "Lives of the Poets;" but we see that he began to speak disrespectfully of her long before that publication; and, indeed, there is hardly any point of Dr. Johnson's conduct less respectable, than the contemptuous way in which he appears to have sometimes spoken of a lady, to whom he continued to address such extravagant compliments as that quoted by Mrs. Piozzi, and to write such flattering letters as we shall read in the course of this work. — C.

(2) [Reflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture.]

(3) [Manière de bien penser dans les Œuvres d'Esprit.]

Macbeth, the beetle and the bat detract from the general idea of darkness — inspissated gloom." (1)

Politics being mentioned, he said, "This petitioning (2) is a new mode of distressing government, and a mighty easy one. I will undertake to get petitions either against quarter guineas or half guineas, with the help of a little hot wine. There must be no yielding to encourage this. The object is not important enough. We are not to blow up half a dozen palaces, because one cottage is burning."

The conversation then took another turn. JOHNSON. "It is amazing what ignorance of certain points one sometimes finds in men of eminence. A wit about town, who wrote Latin bawdy verses, asked me, how it happened that England and Scotland, which were once two kingdoms, were now one: — and Sir Fletcher Norton did not seem to know that there were such publications as the Reviews."

The ballad of Hardyknute (3) has no great merit,

(1) [———— "Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere, to black Hecat's summons
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note." — Act iii. sc. 2.]

(2) A great number of petitions, condemnatory of the proceedings against Mr. Wilkes, and inflamed with all the violence of party, were at this period presented to the King. — C.

(3) It is unquestionably a modern fiction. It was written by Sir John Bruce of Kinross, and first published at Edinburgh in folio, 1719. See "Percy's Reliques of ancient English Poetry," vol. ii. pp. 96. 111. Fourth edition. — MALONE.

Mr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, who has favoured me with several notes and corrections, says, that the real author of the ballad was Lady Wardlaw, daughter of Sir Charles Halket, of Pitferrane, Bart., and wife of Sir Henry Wardlaw of Pitreavie, Bart.; she died about 1727. The reason why Sir John

if it be really ancient. People talk of nature. But mere obvious nature may be exhibited with very little power of mind."

On Thursday, October 19. I passed the evening with him at his house. He advised me to complete a Dictionary of words peculiar to Scotland, of which I showed him a specimen. "Sir," said he, "Ray (1) has made a collection of north-country words. By collecting those of your country, you will do a useful thing towards the history of the language." He bade me also go on with collections which I was making upon the antiquities of Scotland. "Make a large book, a folio." BOSWELL. "But of what use will it be, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Never mind the use; do it."

I complained that he had not mentioned Garrick in his Preface to Shakspeare; and asked him if he did not admire him. JOHNSON. "Yes, as 'a poor player, who frets and struts his hour upon the stage;' — as a shadow." BOSWELL. "But has he not brought Shakspeare into notice?" JOHNSON. "Sir, to allow that, would be to lampoon the age. Many of Shakspeare's plays are the worse for being acted: Macbeth, for instance." BOSWELL. "What, Sir, is nothing gained by decoration and action? Indeed, I

Bruce's name has been mentioned was, probably, that she introduced her ballad to the world by the hands of that gentleman, who was her brother-in-law. — C. 1835.

[The ballad of Hardyknute was the first poem I ever read, and it will be the last I shall forget. — SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

(1) [John Ray, author of the "Historia Plantarum," "English Proverbs," &c. was born in 1628, and died in 1705.]

do wish that you had mentioned Garrick." JOHNSON. "My dear Sir, had I mentioned him, I must have mentioned many more; Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber—nay, and Mr. Cibber too; he too altered Shakspeare." BOSWELL. "You have read his 'Apology' (1), Sir?" JOHNSON. "Yes, it is very entertaining. But as for Cibber himself, taking from his conversation all that he ought not to have said, he was a poor creature. I remember when he brought me one of his Odes to have my opinion of it, I could not bear such nonsense, and would not let him read it to the end; so little respect had I for *that great man!* (laughing.) Yet I remember Richardson wondering that I could treat him with familiarity."

I mentioned to him that I had seen the execution of several convicts at Tyburn (2), two days before, and that none of them seemed to be under any concern. JOHNSON. "Most of them, Sir, have never thought at all." BOSWELL. "But is not the fear of death natural to man?" JOHNSON. "So much so, Sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it." He then, in a low and earnest tone, talked of his meditating upon the awful hour of his own dissolution, and in what manner he should conduct himself upon that occasion: "I know not," said

(1) The Memoirs of himself and of the Stage, which Cibber published under the modest title of an "Apology for his Life." See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 176. — C.

(2) *Six* unhappy men were executed at Tyburn, on Wednesday, the 18th (*one* day before). It was one of the irregularities of Mr. Boswell's mind to be passionately fond of seeing these melancholy spectacles. — C.

he, "whether I should wish to have a friend by me, or have it all between GOD and myself."

Talking of our feeling for the distresses of others:—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, Sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good; more than that Providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose." BOSWELL. "But suppose now, Sir, that one of your intimate friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged." JOHNSON. "I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer." BOSWELL. "Would you eat your dinner that day, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and eat it as if he were eating with me. Why, there's Baretti, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow, friends have risen up for him on every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind."

I told him that I had dined lately at Foote's, who showed me a letter which he had received from Tom Davies, telling him that he had not been able to sleep from the concern he felt on account of "*this sad affair of Baretti*," begging of him to try if he could suggest any thing that might be of service; and, at the same time, recommending to him an industrious young man who kept a pickle-shop." JOHNSON. "Ay, Sir, here you have a specimen of human sympathy; a friend hanged, and a cucumber pickled.* We know not whether Baretti or the

pickle-man has kept Davies from sleep; nor does he know himself. (1) And as to his not sleeping, Sir; Tom Davies is a very great man; Tom has been upon the stage, and knows how to do those things: I have not been upon the stage, and cannot do those things." BOSWELL. "I have often blamed myself, Sir, for not feeling for others as sensibly as many say they do." JOHNSON. "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*." (2)

BOSWELL. "Foote has a great deal of humour." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir." BOSWELL. "He has a singular talent of exhibiting character." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not a talent; it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers: it is farce which exhibits individuals." BOSWELL. "Did not he think of exhibiting you, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, is not Foote an infidel?" JOHNSON. "I do not know, Sir, that the fellow is

(1) It would seem that Davies's anxiety was more sincere than Johnson would represent. He says, in a letter to Granger, "I have been so taken up with a very unlucky accident that befell an intimate friend of mine, that for this last fortnight I have been able to attend to no business, though ever so urgent." Granger's Letters, p. 28. — C.

(2) [On the subject of this conversation, see note (2) of p. 99. *post.*]

an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject." (1) BOSWELL. "I suppose, Sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind." JOHNSON. "Why then, Sir, still he is like a dog, that snatches the piece next him. Did you never observe that dogs have not the power of comparing? A dog will take a small bit of meat as readily as a large, when both are before him."

"Buchanan," he observed, "has fewer *centos* than any modern Latin poet. He has not only had great knowledge of the Latin language, but was a great poetical genius. Both the Scaligers praise him."

He again talked of the passage in Congreve with high commendation, and said, "Shakspeare never has six lines together without a fault. (2) Perhaps you may find seven: but this does not refute my general assertion. If I come to an orchard, and say

(1) When Mr. Foote was at Edinburgh, he thought fit to entertain a numerous Scotch company, with a great deal of coarse jocularity, at the expense of Dr. Johnson, imagining it would be acceptable. I felt this as not civil to me; but sat very patiently till he had exhausted his merriment on that subject; and then observed, that surely Johnson must be allowed to have some sterling wit, and that I had heard him say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. "Ah! my old friend Sam," cried Foote, "no man says better things: do let us have it." Upon which I told the above story, which produced a very loud laugh from the company. But I never saw Foote so disconcerted. He looked grave and angry, and entered into a serious refutation of the justice of the remark. "What, Sir," said he, "talk thus of a man of liberal education;—a man who for years was at the University of Oxford;—a man who has added sixteen new characters to the English drama of his country!"

(2) What strange "laxity of talk" this is from the author of the "Preface to Shakspeare!" See *antè*, p. 87.—C.

there's no fruit here, and then comes a poring man, who finds two apples and three pears, and tells me, 'Sir, you are mistaken, I have found both apples and pears,' I should laugh at him: what would that be to the purpose?"

BOSWELL. "What do you think of Dr. Young's 'Night Thoughts,' Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, there are very fine things in them." BOSWELL. "Is there not less religion in the nation now, Sir, than there was formerly?" JOHNSON. "I don't know, Sir, that there is." BOSWELL. "For instance, there used to be a chaplain in every great family, which we do not find now." JOHNSON. "Neither do you find any of the state servants which great families used formerly to have. There is a change of modes in the whole department of life."

Next day, October 20., he appeared, for the only time I suppose in his life, as a witness in a court of justice, being called to give evidence to the character of Mr. Baretti, who, having stabbed a man in the street (1), was arraigned at the Old Bailey for murder. Never did such a constellation of genius enlighten the awful Sessions-house, emphatically called Justice-hall; Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Beauclerk, and Dr. Johnson: and undoubtedly their favourable estimony had due weight with the court and jury.

(1) [On the 3d of October, as Baretti was going hastily up the Haymarket, he was accosted by a woman, who behaving with great indecency, he was provoked to give her a blow on the hand: upon which, three men immediately interfering, and endeavouring to push him from the pavement, with a view to throw him into a puddle, he was alarmed for his safety, and rashly struck one of them with a knife (which he constantly wore for the purpose of carving fruit and sweetmeats), and gave him a wound, of which he died the next day. — Europ. Mag. vol. xvi. p. 91.]

Johnson gave his evidence in a slow, deliberate, and distinct manner, which was uncommonly impressive. (1) It is well known that Mr. Baretti was acquitted. (2)

(1) The following is the substance of Dr. Johnson's evidence: — "Dr. J. I believe I began to be acquainted with Mr. Baretti about the year 1753 or 54. I have been intimate with him. He is a man of literature, a very studious man, a man of great diligence. He gets his living by study. I have no reason to think he was ever disordered with liquor in his life. A man that I never knew to be otherwise than peaceable, and a man that I take to be rather timorous. — Q. Was he addicted to pick up women in the streets? — Dr. J. I never knew that he was. — Q. How is he as to eyesight? — Dr. J. He does not see me now, nor do I see him. I do not believe he could be capable of assaulting any body in the street, without great provocation." — Gent. Mag.

(2) On the subject of sympathy with the distress of others, discussed in the foregoing conversation (p. 96. *ante*), Mrs. Piozzi says — While Dr. Johnson possessed the strongest compassion for poverty or illness, he did not even pretend to feel for those who lamented the loss of a child, a parent, or a friend. "These are the distresses of sentiment," he would reply, "which a man who is really to be pitied has no leisure to feel. The sight of people who want food and raiment is so common in great cities, that a surly fellow like me has no compassion to spare for wounds given only to vanity or softness." Canter, indeed, was he none: he would forget to ask people after the health of their nearest relations, and say, in excuse, "That he knew they did not care: why should they?" said he, "every one in this world has as much as they can do in caring for themselves, and few have leisure really to *think* of their neighbours' distresses, however they may delight their tongues with *talking* of them." We talked of Lady Tavistock*, who grieved herself to death for the loss of her husband. "She was rich and wanted employment," says Johnson, "so she cried till she lost all power of constraining her tears: other women are forced to outlive their husbands, who were just as much beloved, depend on it; but they have no time for grief: and I doubt not, if we had put my Lady Tavistock into a small chandler's shop, and given her a nurse-child to tend, her life would have been saved. The poor

* Lady Elizabeth Keppel, fifth daughter of the second Earl of Albemarle, married, in 1764, to Francis, eldest son of the fourth Duke of Bedford. He was killed by a fall from his horse, March, 1767. His lady did not die till October, 1768. They were the parents of the late and present Dukes of Bedford. — C.

and the busy have no leisure for sentimental sorrow." I mentioned an event, which, if it had happened, would greatly have injured Mr. Thrale and his family — "and then, dear sir," said I, "how sorry you would have been!" — "I *hope*," replied he, after a long pause, "I should have been *very* sorry; but remember Rochefoucault's maxim." * An acquaintance lost the almost certain hope of a good estate that had been long expected. "Such a one will grieve," said I, "at her friend's disappointment."—"She will suffer as much, perhaps," said he, "as your horse did when your cow miscarried." I professed myself sincerely grieved when accumulated distresses had crushed Sir George Colebrook's family; and I was so. "Your own prosperity," said he, "may possibly have so far increased the natural tenderness of your heart, that for aught I know you *may* be a *little sorry*; but it is sufficient for a plain man if he does not laugh when he sees a fine new house tumble down all on a sudden, and a snug cottage stand by ready to receive the owner, whose birth entitled him to nothing better, and whose limbs are left him to go to work again with." — Nothing, indeed, more surely disgusted Dr. Johnson than hyperbole: he loved not to be told of sallies of excellence, which he said were seldom valuable, and seldom true. "Heroic virtues," said he, "are the *bon mots* of life; they do not appear often, and when they do appear are too much prized, I think; like the aloe-tree, which shoots and flowers once in a hundred years. But life is made up of little things; and that character is the best, which does little but repeated acts of beneficence: as that conversation is the best which consists in elegant and pleasing thoughts expressed in natural and pleasing terms. With regard to my own notions of moral virtue," continued he, "I hope I have not lost my sensibility of wrong; but I hope likewise that I have lived long enough in the world, to prevent me from expecting to find any action of which both the original motive and all the parts were good."

Dr. Johnson had been a great reader of Mandeville, and was ever on the watch to spy out those stains of original corruption, so easily discovered by a penetrating observer even in the purest minds. The natural depravity of mankind and the remains of original sin were so fixed in his opinion, that he was a most acute observer of their effects; and used to say sometimes, half in jest, half in earnest, that his observations were the remains of his old tutor Mandeville's instructions. No man, therefore, who smarted from the ingratitude of his friends, found any sympathy from our philosopher: "Let him do good on higher motives next time," would be the answer; "he will then be sure of his reward." As a book, however, he took care always loudly to condemn the Fable of the Bees, but not without adding, "that it was the work of a thinking man."

* Viz.: "In the misfortunes of our best friends there is always something to please us."

CHAPTER IV.

1769—1770.

" Making Fools of one's Visiters." — Trade. — Mrs. Williams's Tea-table. — James Ferguson. — Medicated Baths. — " Coddling " Children. — Population of Russia. — Large Farms. — Attachment to Soil. — Roman Catholic Religion. — Conversion to Popery. — Fear of Death. — Steevens. — " Tom Tyers." — Blackmore's " Creation." — The Marriage Service. — " The False Alarm." — Percival Stockdale. — Self-examination. — Visit to Lichfield — and Ashbourne. — Baretti's Travels. — Letters to Mrs. Thrale — Warton, &c.

On the 26th of October, we dined together at the Mitre tavern. I found fault with Foote for indulging his talent of ridicule at the expense of his visiters, which I colloquially termed making fools of his company. Johnson. " Why, Sir, when you go to see Foote, you do not go to see a saint: you go to see a man who will be entertained at your house, and then bring you on a public stage; who will entertain you at his house, for the very purpose of bringing you on a public stage. Sir, he does not make fools of his company; they whom he exposes are fools already: he only brings them into action."

Talking of trade, he observed, " It is a mistaken notion that a vast deal of money is brought into a nation by trade. It is not so. Commodities come

from commodities; but trade produces no capital accession of wealth. However, though there should be little profit in money, there is a considerable profit in pleasure, as it gives to one nation the productions of another; as we have wines and fruits, and many other foreign articles, brought to us." BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir, and there is a profit in pleasure, by its furnishing occupation to such numbers of mankind." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you cannot call that pleasure, to which all are averse, and which none begin but with the hope of leaving off; a thing which men dislike before they have tried it, and when they have tried it." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, the mind must be employed, and we grow weary when idle." JOHNSON. "That is, Sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were all idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another. There is, indeed, this in trade; — it gives men an opportunity of improving their situation. If there were no trade, many who are poor would always remain poor. But no man loves labour for itself." BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir, I know a person who does. He is a very laborious Judge, and he loves the labour." JOHNSON. "Sir, that is because he loves respect and distinction. Could he have them without labour, he would like it less." BOSWELL. "He tells me he likes it for itself." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he fancies so, because he is not accustomed to abstract."

We went home to his house to tea. Mrs. Williams made it with sufficient dexterity, notwithstanding her blindness, though her manner of satisfying her-

self that the cups were full enough, appeared to me a little awkward; for I fancied she put her finger down a certain way, till she felt the tea touch it. (1) In my first elation at being allowed the privilege of attending Dr. Johnson at his late visits to this lady, which was like being *è secretioribus consiliis*, I willingly drank cup after cup, as if it had been the Heliconian spring. But as the charm of novelty went off, I grew more fastidious; and besides, I discovered that she was of a peevish temper.

There was a pretty large circle this evening. Dr. Johnson was in very good humour, lively, and ready to talk upon all subjects. Mr. Ferguson, the self-taught philosopher (2), told him of a new-invented machine which went without horses (3): a man who sat in it turned a handle, which worked a spring that drove it forward. "Then, Sir," said Johnson, "what is gained is, the man has his choice whether he will move himself alone, or himself and the machine too."

(1) I have since had reason to think that I was mistaken; for I have been informed by a lady, who was long intimate with her, and likely to be a more accurate observer of such matters, that she had acquired such a niceness of touch, as to know, by the feeling on the outside of the cup, how near it was to being full.

(2) [James Ferguson was born in Bamff, in 1710, of very poor parents. While tending his master's sheep, he acquired a knowledge of the stars, and constructed a celestial globe. This attracted the notice of some gentlemen, who procured him further instructions. At length, he went to Edinburgh, where he drew portraits in miniature at a small price; and this profession he pursued afterwards, when he resided in Bolt Court. His mathematical and miscellaneous works are comprised in ten volumes. He died Nov. 16. 1776.]

(3) ["The very ingenious Mr. Patence, of Bolt Court, has constructed a phaeton which goes without horses, and is built on a principle different from any thing of the kind hitherto attempted." — London Chron. Sept. 11. 1769.]

Dominicetti (1) being mentioned, he would not allow him any merit. "There is nothing in all this boasted system. No, Sir; medicated baths can be no better than warm water: their only effect can be that of tepid moisture." One of the company took the other side, maintaining that medicines of various sorts, and some too of most powerful effect, are introduced into the human frame by the medium of the pores; and, therefore, when warm water is impregnated with salutiferous substances, it may produce great effects as a bath. This appeared to me very satisfactory. Johnson did not answer it; but talking for victory, and determined to be master of the field, he had recourse to the device which Goldsmith imputed to him in the witty words of one of Cibber's comedies: "There is no arguing with Johnson; for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the but-end of it." He turned to the gentleman (2), "Well, Sir, go to Dominicetti, and get thyself fumigated; but be sure that the steam be directed to thy *head*, for *that* is the *peccant part*." This produced a triumphant roar of laughter from

(1) Dominicetti was an Italian quack, who made a considerable noise about this time, by the use of medicated baths. He seems to have been received into fashionable society; for we find that he and his wife were much noticed at the celebrated masquerade, given by the King of Denmark, at the Opera House, on the 10th of October, 1768. Ann. Reg. and Gent. Mag. — C. — [Dominicetti's baths were established in 1765, in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. He published several pamphlets on the subject; in one of which he states, that he had expended thirty-seven thousand pounds on this speculation. In 1782, he became a bankrupt.]

(2) This gentleman was probably Mr. Boswell himself. — C.

the motley assembly of philosophers, printers, and dependants, male and female.

I know not how so whimsical a thought came into my mind, but I asked, "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a new-born child with you, what would you do?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I should not much like my company." BOSWELL. "But would you take the trouble of rearing it?" He seemed, as may well be supposed, unwilling to pursue the subject: but upon my persevering in my question, replied, "Why yes, Sir, I would; but I must have all conveniences. If I had no garden, I would make a shed on the roof, and take it there for fresh air. I should feed it, and wash it much, and with warm water to please it, not with cold water to give it pain." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, does not heat relax?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you are *not* to imagine the water is to be very hot. I would not *coddle* the child. No, Sir, the hardy method of treating children does no good. I'll take you five children from London, who shall cuff five Highland children. Sir, a man bred in London will carry a burthen, or run, or wrestle, as well as a man brought up in the hardest manner in the country." BOSWELL. "Good living, I suppose, makes the Londoners strong." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I don't know that it does. Our chairmen from Ireland, who are as strong men as any, have been brought up upon potatoes. Quantity makes up for quality." BOSWELL. "Would you teach this child that I have furnished you with, any thing?" JOHNSON. "No, I should not be apt to teach it." BOSWELL. "Would not

you have a pleasure in teaching it." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I should *not* have a pleasure in teaching it." BOSWELL. "Have you not a pleasure in teaching men! *There* I have you. You have the same pleasure in teaching men, that I should have in teaching children." JOHNSON. "Why, something about that."

BOSWELL. "Do you think, Sir, that what is called natural affection is born with us? It seems to me to be the effect of habit, or of gratitude for kindness. No child has it for a parent whom it has not seen." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I think there is an instinctive natural affection in parents towards their children."

Russia being mentioned as likely to become a great empire, by the rapid increase of population:— JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I see no prospect of their propagating more. They can have no more children than they can get. I know of no way to make them breed more than they do. It is not from reason and prudence that people marry, but from inclination. A man is poor: he thinks, 'I cannot be worse, and so I'll e'en take Peggy.'" BOSWELL. "But have not nations been more populous at one period than another?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir: but that has been owing to the people being less thinned at one period than another, whether by emigrations, war, or pestilence, not by their being more or less prolific. Births at all times bear the same proportion to the same number of people." BOSWELL. "But, to consider the state of our own country;— does not throwing a number of farms into one hand

hurt population?" JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; the same quantity of food being produced, will be consumed by the same number of mouths, though the people may be disposed of in different ways. We see, if corn be dear, and butchers' meat cheap, the farmers all apply themselves to the raising of corn, till it becomes plentiful and cheap, and then butchers' meat becomes dear; so that an equality is always preserved. No, Sir, let fanciful men do as they will, depend upon it, it is difficult to disturb the system of life." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, is it not a very bad thing for landlords to oppress their tenants, by raising their rents?" JOHNSON. "Very bad. But, Sir, it never can have any general influence; it may distress some individuals. For, consider this: landlords cannot do without tenants. Now tenants will not give more for land, than land is worth. If they can make more of their money by keeping a shop, or any other way, they'll do it, and so oblige landlords to let land come back to a reasonable rent, in order that they may get tenants. Land, in England, is an article of commerce. A tenant who pays his landlord his rent, thinks himself no more obliged to him than you think yourself obliged to a man in whose shop you buy a piece of goods. He knows the landlord does not let him have his land for less than he can get from others, in the same manner as the shopkeeper sells his goods. No shopkeeper sells a yard of riband for sixpence when sevenpence is the current price." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, is it not better that tenants should be dependent on landlords?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, as there are many more tenants

than landlords, perhaps, strictly speaking, we should wish not. But if you please you may let your lands cheap, and so get the value, part in money and part in homage. I should agree with you in that." BOSWELL. "So, Sir, you laugh at schemes of political improvement." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things."

He observed, "Providence has wisely ordered that the more numerous men are, the more difficult it is for them to agree in any thing, and so they are governed. There is no doubt, that if the poor should reason, 'We'll be the poor no longer, we'll make the rich take their turn,' they could easily do it, were it not that they can't agree. So the common soldiers, though so much more numerous than their officers, are governed by them for the same reason."

He said, "Mankind have a strong attachment to the habitations to which they have been accustomed. You see the inhabitants of Norway do not with one consent quit it, and go to some part of America, where there is a mild climate, and where they may have the same produce from land, with the tenth part of the labour. No, Sir; their affection for their old dwellings, and the terror of a general change, keep them at home. Thus, we see many of the finest spots in the world thinly inhabited, and many rugged spots well inhabited."

"The London Chronicle," which was the only newspaper he constantly took in, being brought, the office of reading it aloud was assigned to me. I

was diverted by his impatience. He made me pass over so many parts of it, that my task was very easy. He would not suffer one of the petitions to the King about the Middlesex election to be read.

I had hired a Bohemian as my servant while I remained in London; and being much pleased with him, I asked Dr. Johnson whether his being a Roman Catholic should prevent my taking him with me to Scotland. JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir. If *he* has no objection, you can have none." BOSWELL. "So, Sir, you are no great enemy to the Roman Catholic religion." JOHNSON "No more, Sir, than to the Presbyterian religion." BOSWELL. "You are joking." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I really think so. Nay, Sir, of the two, I prefer the Popish." (1) BOSWELL. "How so, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the Presbyterians have no church, no apostolical ordination." BOSWELL. "And do you think that absolutely essential, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, as it was an apostolical institution, I think it is dangerous to be without it. And, Sir, the Presbyterians have no public worship: they have no form of prayer in which they know they are to join. They go to hear a man pray, and are to judge whether they will join with him." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, their doctrine is the same with that of the Church of England. Their confession of faith, and the thirty-nine articles, contain the same points, even the doctrine of predestination." JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; predestination was a part of the clamour

(1) See *antè*, Vol. 1. p. 280.

of the times, so it is mentioned in our articles, but with as little positiveness as could be." BOSWELL. "Is it necessary, Sir, to believe all the thirty-nine articles?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that is a question which has been much agitated. Some have thought it necessary that they should all be believed; others have considered them to be only articles of peace (1), that is to say, you are not to preach against them." BOSWELL. "It appears to me, Sir, that predestination, or what is equivalent to it, cannot be avoided, if we hold an universal prescience in the Deity." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, does not God every day see things going on without preventing them?" BOSWELL. "True, Sir; but if a thing be *certainly* foreseen, it must be fixed, and cannot happen otherwise; and if we apply this consideration to the human mind, there is no free will, nor do I see how prayer can be of any avail." He mentioned Dr. Clarke, and Bishop Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity, and bid me read South's Sermons on Prayer; but avoided the question which has excruciated philosophers and divines, beyond any other. I did not press it further, when I perceived that he was displeased, and shrunk from any abridgement of an attribute usually ascribed to the Divinity, however

(1) Dr. Simon Patrick (afterwards Bishop of Ely) thus expresses himself on this subject, in a letter to the learned Dr. John Mapletoft, dated Feb. 8. 1682-3:—

"I always took the 'Articles' to be only articles of communion; and so Bishop Bramhall expressly maintains against the Bishop of Chalcedon; and I remember well, that Bishop Sanderson, when the King was first restored, received the subscription of an acquaintance of mine, which he declared was not to them as articles of *faith* but *peace*. I think you need make no scruple of the matter, because all that I know, so understand the meaning of subscription, and upon other terms would not subscribe."—M.

irreconcileable in its full extent with the grand system of moral government. His supposed orthodoxy here cramped the vigorous powers of his understanding. He was confined by a chain which early imagination and strong habit made him think massy and strong, but which, had he ventured to try, he could at once have snapt asunder.

I proceeded: "What do you think, Sir, of Purgatory, as believed by the Roman Catholics?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of blessed spirits; and therefore that God is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, Sir, there is nothing unreasonable in this." BOSWELL. "But then, Sir, their masses for the dead?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if it be once established that there are souls in purgatory, it is as proper to pray for *them*, as for our brethren of mankind who are yet in this life." BOSWELL. "The idolatry of the mass?"— JOHNSON. "Sir there is no idolatry in the mass. They believe God to be there, and they adore him." BOSWELL. "The worship of saints?" JOHNSON. "Sir, they do not worship saints; they invoke them; they only ask their prayers.(1) I am talk-

(1) [Jeremy Taylor maintains a very contrary opinion:— "It cannot be supposed that they intend nothing but to desire their prayers; for they rely also on their merits, and hope to get their desires, and to prevail by them also: the practice of the Church tells their secret meaning best."— Dissuasion from Popery, ch. ii.— MARKLAND.]

ing all this time of the *doctrines* of the Church of Rome. I grant you that in *practice*, purgatory is made a lucrative imposition, and that the people do become idolatrous as they recommend themselves to the tutelary protection of particular saints. (1) I think their giving the sacrament only in one kind is criminal, because it is contrary to the express institution of Christ, and I wonder how the Council of Trent admitted it." BOSWELL. "Confession?" JOHNSON. "Why, I don't know but that is a good thing. The Scripture says, 'Confess your faults one to another,' and the priests confess as well as the laity. Then it must be considered that their absolution is only upon repentance and often upon penance also. You think your sins may be forgiven without penance, upon repentance alone."

I thus ventured to mention all the common objections against the Roman Catholic church, that I might hear so great a man upon them. What he said is here accurately recorded. But it is not improbable that, if one had taken the other side, he might have reasoned differently.

I must however mention, that he had a respect for *the old religion*," as the mild Melancthon called that of the Roman Catholic church, even while he was exerting himself for its reformation in some particulars. Sir William Scott informs me, that he heard Johnson say, "A man who is converted

(1) I have now before me a Roman Catholic Prayer-book printed at Ghent so lately as 1828, in which there is a prayer to the Virgin, addressing her as "*Ma divine Princesse*," and another to St. Joseph, as "*Mon aimable patron*." — C.

from Protestantism to Popery, may be sincere: he parts with nothing: he is only superadding to what he already had. But a convert from Popery to Protestantism gives up so much of what he has held as sacred as any thing that he retains—there is so much *laceration of mind* in such a conversion—that it can hardly be sincere and lasting."(1) The truth of this reflection may be confirmed by many and eminent instances, some of which will occur to most of my readers.(2)

When we were alone, I introduced the subject of death, and endeavoured to maintain that the fear of it might be got over. I told him that David Hume said to me, he was no more uneasy to think he should *not be* after his life, than that he *had not been* before he began to exist. JOHNSON. "Sir, if he really thinks so, his perceptions are disturbed; he is mad: if he does not think so, he lies. He may tell you, he holds his finger in the flame of a candle, without feeling pain; would you believe him? When he dies, he at least gives up all he has." BOSWELL. "Foote, Sir, told me, that when he was very ill he

(1) The Bishop of Ferns expresses his surprise, that Johnson should have forgotten Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, and *all those of all nations* who have renounced popery. — C.

(2) I do not understand this allusion. I am not aware of "many and eminent instances" of persons converted *from* popery to protestantism relapsing either into superstition or infidelity. I suspect that Mr. Boswell, who often alludes to Mr. Gibbon's vacillation, really meant *him* in this passage, and that the converse of the proposition in the text — namely, that some converts from Protestantism *to* Popery had ended infidels, was what he intended to maintain. — CROKER. — [But was not Gibbon *re*-converted from Popery to Protestantism, by his Swiss tutor, before he sunk into infidelity? See his Memoirs, *sub anno* 1754.]

was not afraid to die?" JOHNSON. "It is not true, Sir.[1] Hold a pistol to Foote's breast, or to Hume's breast, and threaten to kill them, and you'll see how they behave." BOSWELL. "But may we not fortify our minds for the approach of death?"— Here I am sensible I was in the wrong, to bring before his view what he ever looked upon with horror; for although, when in a celestial frame of mind, in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," he has supposed death to be "kind Nature's signal for retreat" from this state of being to "a happier seat," his thoughts upon this awful change were in general full of dismal apprehensions." His mind resembled the vast amphitheatre, the Colisæum at Rome. In the centre stood his judgment, which, like a mighty gladiator, combated those apprehensions that, like the wild beasts of the *arena*, were all around in cells, ready to be let out upon him. After a conflict, he drives them back into their dens; but not killing them, they were still assailing him. To my question, whether we might not fortify our minds for the approach of death, he answered, in a passion, "No, Sir, let it alone. It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance, it lasts so short a time."

(1) [Foote's statement did not merit so flat a contradiction it is confirmed by those who have had the best means of speaking to the fact. Sir Henry Halford observes, that of the great number he has attended, he has felt surprised that "so few have appeared reluctant to die." He adds, "many, we may easily suppose, have manifested this willingness to die, from an impatience of suffering, or from that passive indifference, which is sometimes the result of debility and extreme bodily pain." Essays, p. 69.— MARKLAND.]

He added, (with an earnest look), "A man knows it must be so, and submits. It will do him no good to whine."

I attempted to continue the conversation. He was so provoked, that he said,—"Give us no more of this;" and was thrown into such a state of agitation (1), that he expressed himself in a way that alarmed and distressed me; showed an impatience that I should leave him, and when I was going away, called to me sternly, "Don't let us meet to-morrow."

I went home exceedingly uneasy. All the harsh observations which I had ever heard made upon his character, crowded into my mind; and I seemed to myself like the man who had put his head into the lion's mouth a great many times with perfect safety, but at last had it bit off.

Next morning I sent him a note, stating that I might have been in the wrong, but it was not intentionally; he was therefore, I could not help thinking, too severe upon me. That notwithstanding our agreement not to meet that day, I would call on him in my way to the city, and stay five minutes by my watch. "You are," said I, "in my mind, since last night, surrounded with cloud and storm. Let me have a glimpse of sunshine, and go about my affairs in serenity and cheerfulness."

Upon entering his study, I was glad that he was not alone, which would have made our meeting

(1) This was a touch of "that sad humour which his father gave him." See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 29.—C.

more awkward. There were with him, Mr. Steevens (1) and Mr. Tyers (2), both of whom I now saw for the first time. My note had, on his own reflection, softened him, for he received me very complacently; so that I unexpectedly found myself at ease, and joined in the conversation.

He said, the critics had done too much honour to Sir Richard Blackmore, by writing so much against him. That, in his "Creation," he had been helped by various wits, a line by Phillips and a line by Tickell; so that by their aid, and that of others, the poem had been made out. (3)

(1) George Steevens, Esq., who, in the next year, became associated with Johnson in the edition of Shakspeare, which goes by their joint name. Mr. Steevens was born in 1736, and died at Hampstead in 1800. A cynical disposition rendered him unpopular with his acquaintance, as we shall have occasion to notice in the sequel. — C.

(2) [For Boswell's account of "Tom Tyers," as Johnson always called him, see *post*, April 17. 1778. His literary qualifications are thus pleasantly described in "The Idler," No. 48.; a circumstance pointed out to Mr. Nichols by Dr. Johnson himself: —

"Learning is generally confessed to be desirable, and there are some who fancy themselves always busy in acquiring it. Of these ambulatory students, one of the most busy is my friend Tom Restless. Tom has long had a mind to be a man of knowledge; but he does not care to spend much time among authors, for he is of opinion that few books deserve the labour of perusal. Tom has, therefore, found another way to wisdom. When he rises, he goes into a coffee-house, where he creeps so near to men whom he takes to be reasoners, as to hear their discourse; and endeavours to remember something, which, when it has been strained through Tom's head, is so near to nothing, that what it once was cannot be discovered. This he carries round from friend to friend, through a circle of visits, till, hearing what each says upon the question, he becomes able, at dinner, to say a little himself; and, as every great genius relaxes himself among his inferiors, meets with some who wonder how any mortal man can talk so wisely. At night, he has a new feast prepared for his intellects; he always runs to some society, or club, where he half hears what he would but half understand; goes home pleased with the consciousness of a day well spent; lies down full of ideas, and rises in the morning, empty as before."]

(3) Johnson himself has vindicated Blackmore upon this very point. See the Lives of the Poets, vol. iii. p. 75. 8vo, 1791. — J. Boswell, Jun.

I defended Blackmore's supposed lines, which have been ridiculed as absolute nonsense: —

"A painted vest Prince Voltiger had on,
Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won." (1)

I maintained it to be a poetical conceit. A Pict being painted, if he is slain in battle, and a vest is made of his skin, it is a painted vest won from him, though he was naked.

Johnson spoke unfavourably of a certain pretty voluminous author, saying, "He used to write anonymous books, and then other books commending those books, in which there was something of rascality."

I whispered him, "Well, Sir, you are now in good humour." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir." I was going to leave him, and had got as far as the staircase.

(1) An acute correspondent of the European Magazine, April, 1792, has completely exposed a mistake which has been unaccountably frequent in ascribing these lines to Blackmore, notwithstanding that Sir Richard Steele, in that very popular work, "The Spectator," mentions them as written by the author of "The British Princes," the Hon. Edward Howard. The correspondent above mentioned, shows this mistake to be so inveterate, that not only *I* defended the lines as Blackmore's, in the presence of Dr. Johnson, without any contradiction or doubt of their authenticity, but that the Rev. Mr. Whitaker has asserted in print, that he understands they were *suppressed* in the late edition or editions of Blackmore. "After all," says this intelligent writer, "it is not unworthy of particular observation, that these lines, so often quoted, do not exist either in Blackmore or Howard." In "The British Princes," 8vo, 1669, now before me, p. 96, they stand thus: —

"A vest as admired Voltiger had on,
Which from this Island's foes his grandsire won,
Whose artful colour pass'd the Tyrian dye,
Obliged to triumph in this legacy."

It is probable, I think, that some wag, in order to make Howard still more ridiculous than he really was, has formed the couplet as it now circulates.

He stopped me, and smiling, said, "Get you gone *in;*" a curious mode of inviting me to stay, which I accordingly did for some time longer.

This little incidental quarrel and reconciliation, which, perhaps, I may be thought to have detailed too minutely, must be esteemed as one of many proofs which his friends had, that though he might be charged with *bad humour* at times, he was always a *good-natured* man; and I have heard Sir Joshua Reynolds, a nice and delicate observer of manners, particularly remark, that when upon any occasion Johnson had been rough to any person in company, he took the first opportunity of reconciliation, by drinking to him, or addressing his discourse to him; but if he found his dignified indirect overtures sullenly neglected, he was quite indifferent, and considered himself as having done all that he ought to do, and the other as now in the wrong.

Being to set out for Scotland on the 10th of November, I wrote to him at Streatham, begging that he would meet me in town on the 9th; but if this should be very inconvenient to him, I would go thither. His answer was as follows:—

LETTER 119. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Nov. 9. 1769.

"DEAR SIR,—Upon balancing the inconveniences of both parties, I find it will less incommode you to spend your night here, than me to come to town. I wish to see you, and am ordered by the lady of this house to invite you hither. Whether you can come or not, I shall not have any occasion of writing to you again before your marriage, and therefore tell you now, that

with great sincerity I wish you happiness. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I was detained in town till it was too late on the 9th, so went to him early in the morning of the 10th of November. "Now," said he, "that you are going to marry, do not expect more from life than life will afford. You may often find yourself out of humour, and you may often think your wife not studious enough to please you; and yet you may have reason to consider yourself as upon the whole very happily married."

Talking of marriage in general, he observed, "Our marriage service is too refined. It is calculated only for the best kind of marriages: whereas, we should have a form for matches of convenience, of which there are many."(1) He agreed with me that there was no absolute necessity for having the marriage ceremony performed by a regular clergyman, for this was not commanded in Scripture.

I was volatile enough to repeat to him a little epigrammatic song of mine, on matrimony, which Mr. Garrick had, a few days before, procured to be set to music by the very ingenious Mr. Dibden.

(1) It may be suspected that Mr. Boswell, in transcribing for the press, at the interval of twenty-five years, his original note, may have misrepresented Dr. Johnson's opinion. There are, no doubt, marriages of convenience, but such often turn out to be very happy marriages. Moreover, one would ask, how is the marriage ceremony too *refined?* and, again, if there were two services, who would ever consent to be married by that which implied some degree of degradation, or at least of inferiority? and finally, how is one to guess, beforehand, how a marriage is to turn out? — C.

A Matrimonial Thought.

"In the blithe days of honey-moon,
With Kate's allurements smitten,
I loved her late, I loved her soon,
And call'd her dearest kitten.

"But now my kitten's grown a cat,
And cross like other wives;
Oh! by my soul, my honest Mat,
I fear she has nine lives."

My illustrious friend said, "It is very well, Sir; but you should not swear." Upon which I altered "O! by my soul," to "alas, alas!"

He was so good as to accompany me to London, and see me into the post-chaise which was to carry me on my road to Scotland. And sure I am, that however inconsiderable many of the particulars recorded at this time may appear to some, they will be esteemed by the best part of my readers as genuine traits of his character, contributing together to give a full, fair, and distinct view of it.

In 1770, he published a political pamphlet, entitled "The False Alarm," intended to justify the conduct of ministry and their majority in the House of Commons, for having virtually assumed it as an axiom, that the expulsion of a member of parliament was equivalent to exclusion, and thus having declared Colonel Luttrell to be duly elected for the county of Middlesex, notwithstanding Mr. Wilkes had a great majority of votes. This being justly considered as a gross violation of the right of election an alarm for the constitution extended itself all over the kingdom. To prove this alarm to be false,

was the purpose of Johnson's pamphlet; but even his vast powers were inadequate to cope with constitutional truth and reason, and his argument failed of effect; and the House of Commons have since expunged the offensive resolution from their Journals. That the House of Commons might have expelled Mr. Wilkes repeatedly, and as often as he should be re-chosen, was not denied; but incapacitation cannot be but by an act of the whole legislature. It was wonderful to see how a prejudice in favour of government in general, and an aversion to popular clamour, could blind and contract such an understanding as Johnson's, in this particular case; yet the wit, the sarcasm, the eloquent vivacity which this pamphlet displayed, made it be read with great avidity (1) at the time, and it will ever be read with pleasure, for the sake of its composition. That it endeavoured to infuse a narcotic indifference, as to public concerns, into the minds of the people, and that it broke out sometimes into an extreme coarseness of contemptuous abuse, is but too evident.

It must not, however, be omitted, that when the storm of his violence subsides, he takes a fair opportunity to pay a grateful compliment to the King, who had rewarded his merit: — "These low-born rulers have endeavoured, surely without effect, to alienate the affections of the people from the only King who for almost a century has much appeared to desire, or much endeavoured to deserve them." And

(1) ["The False Alarm" was published by T. Cadell, in the Strand, Jan. 16. 1770; a second edition appeared Feb. 6., and a third, March 13.]

"Every honest man must lament, that the faction has been regarded with frigid neutrality by the Tories, who being long accustomed to signalise their principles by opposition to the Court, do not yet consider, that they have at last a King who knows not the name of party, and who wishes to be the common father of all his people." (1)

To this pamphlet, which was at once discovered to be Johnson's, several answers came out, in which care was taken to remind the public of his former attacks upon government, and of his now being a pensioner, without allowing for the honourable terms upon which Johnson's pension was granted and accepted, or the change of system which the British court had undergone upon the accession of his present Majesty. He was, however, soothed in the highest strain of panegyric, in a poem called "The Remonstrance," by the Rev. Mr. Stockdale (2), to whom he was, upon many occasions, a kind protector.

(1) This, his first and favourite pamphlet, was written at our house, between eight o'clock on Wednesday night and twelve o'clock on Thursday night: we read it to Mr. Thrale, when he came very late home from the House of Commons. — PIOZZI.

(2) The Rev. Percival Stockdale, whose strange and rambling "Autobiography" was published in 1808: he was the author of several bad poems, and died in 1810, at the age of 75. He was Johnson's neighbour for some years, both in Johnson's Court and Bolt Court. — C. — [*From the animated, ingenious, and eccentric Percival Stockdale, Miss Burney drew the Belfield of her 'Cecilia.' His 'Memoirs' were written under the pressure of extreme debility, and nervous irritation, from the rapid increase of a disorder he inherited from his cradle. Irritability of temper was, indeed, his only fault. He has left behind him the remembrance of his charities in the breasts of the poor, and the image of his worth in the hearts of many lamenting friends. — JANE PORTER.*]

The following admirable minute made by him, describes so well his own state, and that of numbers to whom self-examination is habitual, that I cannot omit it: —

"June 1. 1770. Every man naturally persuades himself that he can keep his resolutions, nor is he convinced of his imbecility but by length of time and frequency of experiment. This opinion of our own constancy is so prevalent, that we always despise him who suffers his general and settled purpose to be overpowered by an occasional desire. They, therefore, whom frequent failures have made desperate, cease to form resolutions; and they who are become cunning, do not tell them. Those who do not make them are very few, but of their effect little is perceived; for scarcely any man persists in a course of life planned by choice, but as he is restrained from deviation by some external power. He who may live as he will, seldom lives long in the observation of his own rules. I never yet saw a regular family, unless it were that of Mrs. Harriot's, nor a regular man, except Mr. —— (1), whose exactness I know only by his own report, and Psalmanazer, whose life was, I think, uniform." [Pr. and Med. p. 100.]

Of this year I have obtained the following letters: —

LETTER 120. TO THE REV. DR. FARMER.

"Johnson's Court, March 21. 1770.

"SIR, — As no man ought to keep wholly to himself any possession that may be useful to the public, I hope you will not think me unreasonably intrusive, if I have recourse to you for such information as you are more able to give me than any other man.

* * *

(1) The name in the original manuscript is, as Dr. Hall informs me, *Campbell*. The Scotch non-juring Bishop Campbell was probably the person meant. — C.

"In support of an opinion which you have already placed above the need of any more support, Mr. Steevens, a very ingenious gentleman, lately of King's College, has collected an account of all the translations which Shakspeare might have seen and used. He wishes his catalogue to be perfect, and therefore intreats that you will favour him by the insertion of such additions as the accuracy of your inquiries has enabled you to make. To this request, I take the liberty of adding my own solicitation.

"We have no immediate use for this catalogue, and therefore do not desire that it should interrupt or hinder your more important employments. But it will be kind to let us know that you receive it. I am, Sir, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 121. TO MRS. LUCY PORTER.

"May 1. 1770.

"DEAREST MADAM,—Among other causes that have hindered me from answering your last kind letter, is a tedious and painful rheumatism, that has afflicted me for many weeks, and still continues to molest me. I hope you are well, and will long keep your health and your cheerfulness.

"One reason why I delayed to write was, my un-uncertainty how to answer your letter. I like the thought of giving away the money very well; but when I consider that Tom Johnson is my nearest relation, and that he is now old and in great want; that he was my playfellow in childhood, and has never done any thing to offend me; I am in doubt whether I ought not rather give it him than any other.

"Of this, my dear, I would have your opinion. I would willingly please you, and I know that you will be pleased best with what you think right. Tell me your mind, and do not learn of me to neglect writing; for it is a very sorry trick, though it be mine.

"Your brother is well; I saw him to-day, and thought it long since I saw him before: it seems he has called often and could not find me. I am, my dear, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 122. TO THE SAME.

"London, May 29. 1770.

"MY DEAREST DEAR, — I am very sorry that your eyes are bad; take great care of them, especially by candlelight. Mine continue pretty good, but they are sometimes a little dim. My rheumatism grows gradually better. I have considered your letter, and am willing that the whole money should go where you, my dear, originally intended. I hope to help Tom some other way. So that matter is over.

"Dr. Taylor has invited me to pass some time with him at Ashbourne; if I come, you may be sure that I shall take you and Lichfield in my way. When I am nearer coming, I will send you word.

"Of Mr. Porter I have seen very little, but I know not that it is his fault, for he says that he often calls, and never finds me; I am sorry for it, for I love him. Mr. Mathias has lately had a great deal of money left him, of which you have probably heard already. I am, my dearest, your most affectionate servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 123. TO THE REV. THOMAS WARTON.

"London, June 23. 1770.

"DEAR SIR, — The readiness with which you were pleased to promise me some notes on Shakspeare, was a new instance of your friendship. I shall not hurry you; but am desired by Mr. Steevens, who helps me in this edition, to let you know, that we shall print the tragedies first, and shall therefore want first the notes

which belong to them. We think not to incommode the readers with a supplement; and therefore, what we cannot put into its proper place, will do us no good. We shall not begin to print before the end of six weeks, perhaps not so soon. I am, &c.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 124. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Lichfield, July 7. 1770

"I thought I should have heard something to-day about Streatham; but there is no letter; and I need some consolation, for rheumatism is come again, though in a less degree than formerly. I reckon to go next week to Ashbourne, and will try to bring you the dimensions of the great bull. The skies and the ground are all so wet, that I have been very little abroad, and Mrs. Aston is from home, so that I have no motive to walk. When she is at home, she lives on the top of Stowhill, and I commonly climb up to see her once a day. There is nothing there now but the empty nest. To write to you about Lichfield is of no use, for you never saw Stow-pool, nor Borowcop-hill. I believe you may find Borow or Boroughcop-hill in my Dictionary, under cop or cob. Nobody here knows what the name imports."

"Lichfield, July 11. 1770

"Mr. Greene (1), the apothecary, has found a book which tells who paid levies in our parish, and how much they paid above an hundred years ago. Do you not think we study this book hard? Nothing is like going to the bottom of things. Many families that paid the parish rates are now extinct, like the race of Hercules. *Pulvis et umbra sumus.* What is nearest us touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies. I am not wholly unaffected by the revolutions in Sadler Street; nor can forbear to

(1) See *post*, March 23. 1776. — C.

mourn, when old names vanish away, and new come into their place."

"Ashbourne, July 20. 1770.

"I came hither on Wednesday, having staid one night at a lodge in the forest of Nedewood. Dr. Taylor's is a very pleasant house, with a lawn and a lake, and twenty deer and five fawns upon the lawn. Whether I shall by any light see Matlock I do not yet know.

"That Baretti's book (1) would please you all I made no doubt. I know not whether the world has ever seen such travels before. Those whose lot it is to ramble can seldom write, and those who know how to write very seldom ramble. If Sidney had gone, as he desired, the great voyage with Drake, there would probably have been such a narrative as would have equally satisfied the poet and the philosopher."

"Ashbourne, July 23. 1770.

"I have seen the great bull (2), and very great he is. I have seen likewise his heir apparent, who promises to inherit all the bulk and all the virtues of his sire. I have seen the man who offered an hundred guineas for the young bull, while he was yet little better than a calf. Matlock, I am afraid, I shall not see, but I purpose to see Dovedale; and, after all this seeing, I hope to see you."

LETTER 125. TO THE REV. DR. JOSEPH WARTON.

"Sept. 21. 1770.

"DEAR SIR, — I am revising my edition of Shakspeare, and remember that I formerly misrepresented your opinion of Lear. Be pleased to write the paragraph as you would have it, and send it. If you have

(1) ["Travels through Spain, Portugal, and France," in four volumes, 8vo, published May 12. 1770, by Thomas Davies, in Russell Street, Covent Garden.]

(2) Dr. Taylor had a remarkably fine breed of cattle; and one bull, in particular, was of celebrated beauty and size. — C.

any remarks of your own upon that or any other play, I shall gladly receive them. Make my compliments to Mrs. Warton. I sometimes think of wandering for a few days to Winchester, but am apt to delay. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 126. TO MR. FRANCIS BARBER,

At Mrs. Clapp's, Bishop-Stortford.

"London, Sept. 25. 1770

"Dear Francis,—I am at last sat down to write to you, and should very much blame myself for having neglected you so long, if I did not impute that and many other failings to want of health. I hope not to be so long silent again. I am very well satisfied with your progress, if you can really perform the exercises which you are set; and I hope Mr. Ellis does not suffer you to impose on him, or on yourself. Make my compliments to Mr. Ellis, and to Mrs. Clapp, and Mr. Smith

"Let me know what English books you read for your entertainment. You can never be wise unless you love reading. Do not imagine that I shall forget or forsake you; for if, when I examine you, I find that you have not lost your time, you shall want no encouragement from yours affectionately,

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 127. TO THE SAME.

"December 7. 1770.

"Dear Francis,—I hope you mind your business. I design you shall stay with Mrs. Clapp these holidays. If you are invited out you may go, if Mr. Ellis gives leave. I have ordered you some clothes, which you will receive, I believe, next week. My compliments to Mrs. Clapp, and to Mr. Ellis, and Mr. Smith, &c.—I am your affectionate Sam. Johnson."

CHAPTER V.

1770.

Dr. Maxwell's Collectanea. — Johnson's Politics, and general Mode of Life. — Opulent Tradesmen. — London. — Black-letter Books. — "Anatomy of Melancholy." — Government of Ireland. — Love. — Jacob Behmen. — Established Clergy. — Dr. Priestley. — Blank Verse. — French Novels. — Pere Boscovich. — Lord Lyttelton's Dialogues. — Ossian. — Woodhouse, the Poetical Cobbler. — Boetius. — National Debt. — Mallet. — Marriage. — Foppery. — Gilbert Cooper. — Homer. — Gregory Sharpe. — Poor of England. — Corn Laws. — Dr. Browne. — Mr. Burke. — Economy. — Fortune-hunters. — Orchards. — Irish Clergy.

During this year there was a total cessation of all correspondence between Dr. Johnson and me, without any coldness on either side, but merely from procrastination, continued from day to day; and, as I was not in London, I had no opportunity of enjoying his company and recording his conversation. To supply this blank, I shall present my readers with some *Collectanea*, obligingly furnished to me by the Rev. Dr. Maxwell (1), of Falkland, in Ireland, some time

(1) Dr. William Maxwell was the son of Dr. John Maxwell, Archdeacon of Downe, in Ireland, and cousin of the Honourable Henry Maxwell, Bishop of Dromore in 1765, and of Meath in 1766, from whom he obtained preferment; but having a considerable property of his own, he resigned the living when, as it is said, his residence was insisted on; and he lived himself in Bath, where he died, so late as 1818, at the age of 87. — C.

assistant preacher at the Temple, and for many years the social friend of Johnson, who spoke of him with a very kind regard.

Collectanea.

"My acquaintance with that great and venerable character commenced in the year 1754. I was introduced to him by Mr. Grierson (1), his Majesty's printer at Dublin, a gentleman of uncommon learning, and great wit and vivacity. Mr. Grierson died in Germany, at the age of twenty-seven. Dr. Johnson highly respected his abilities, and often observed, that he possessed more extensive knowledge than any man of his years he had ever known. His industry was equal to his talents; and he particularly excelled in every species of philological learning, and was, perhaps, the best critic of the age he lived in.

"I must always remember with gratitude my obligation to Mr. Grierson, for the honour and happiness of Dr. Johnson's acquaintance and friendship, which continued uninterrupted and undiminished to his death: a connection, that was at once the pride and happiness of my life.

"What pity it is, that so much wit and good sense as he continually exhibited in conversation, should perish unrecorded! Few persons quitted his company without perceiving themselves wiser and better

(1) Son of the learned Mrs. Grierson, who was patronised by the late Lord Granville, and was the editor of several of the classics. — B. — Her edition of Tacitus, with the notes of Rychius, in three volumes, 8vo, 1730, was dedicated, in very elegant Latin, to John, Lord Carteret (afterwards Earl Granville), by whom she was patronised during his residence in Ireland as Lord Lieutenant between 1724 and 1730. — M. — Lord Carteret gave her family the lucrative patent office of king's printer in Ireland, still enjoyed by her descendants. She was very beautiful, as well as learned. — C.

than they were before. On serious subjects he flashed the most interesting conviction upon his auditors; and upon lighter topics, you might have supposed — *Albano musas de monte locutas.*

"Though I can hope to add but little to the celebrity of so exalted a character, by any communications I can furnish, yet, out of pure respect to his memory, I will venture to transmit to you some anecdotes concerning him, which fell under my own observation. The very *minutiæ* of such a character must be interesting, and may be compared to the filings of diamonds.

"In politics he was deemed a Tory, but certainly was not so in the obnoxious or party sense of the term; for while he asserted the legal and salutary prerogatives of the crown, he no less respected the constitutional liberties of the people. Whiggism, at the time of the Revolution, he said, was accompanied with certain principles; but latterly, as a mere party distinction under Walpole and the Pelhams, was no better than the politics of stock-jobbers, and the religion of infidels.

"He detested the idea of governing by parliamentary corruption, and asserted most strenuously, that a prince steadily and conspicuously pursuing the interests of his people could not fail of parliamentary concurrence. A prince of ability, he contended, might and should be the directing soul and spirit of his own administration; in short, his own minister, and not the mere head of a party: and then, and not till then, would the royal dignity be sincerely respected.

"Johnson seemed to think, that a certain degree of crown influence (1) over the Houses of Parliament,

(1) On the necessity of crown influence, see Boucher's "Sermons on the American Revolution," p. 218.; and Paley's "Moral Philosophy," b. vi. ch. vii. p. 491., 4to, there quoted. — BLAKEWAY.

(not meaning a corrupt and shameful dependence) was very salutary, nay, even necessary, in our mixed government. 'For,' said he, 'if the members were under no crown influence, and disqualified from receiving any gratification from Court, and resembled, as they possibly might, Pym and Haslerig, and other stubborn and sturdy members of the Long Parliament, the wheels of government would be totally obstructed. Such men would oppose, merely to show their power, from envy, jealousy, and perversity of disposition; and, not gaining themselves, would hate and oppose all who did: not loving the person of the prince, and conceiving they owed him little gratitude, from the mere spirit of insolence and contradiction, they would oppose and thwart him upon all occasions.'

"The inseparable imperfection annexed to all human governments consisted, he said, in not being able to create a sufficient fund of virtue and principle to carry the laws into due and effectual execution. Wisdom might plan, but virtue alone could execute. And where could sufficient virtue be found? A variety of delegated, and often discretionary, powers must be entrusted somewhere; which, if not governed by integrity and conscience, would necessarily be abused, till at last the constable would sell his for a shilling.

"This excellent person was sometimes charged with betting slavish and arbitrary principles of government. Nothing, in my opinion, could be a grosser calumny and misrepresentation; for how can it be rationally supposed, that he should adopt such pernicious and absurd opinions, who supported his philosophical character with so much dignity, was extremely jealous of his personal liberty and independence, and could not brook the smallest appearance of neglect or insult, even from the highest personages?

"But let us view him in some instances of more familiar life.

"His general mode of life, during my acquaintance, seemed to be pretty uniform. About twelve o'clock I commonly visited him, and frequently found him in bed, or declaiming over his tea, which he drank very plentifully. He generally had a levee of morning visiters, chiefly men of letters; Hawkesworth, Goldsmith, Murphy, Langton, Steevens, Beauclerk, &c. &c. and sometimes learned ladies; particularly I remember a French lady (1) of wit and fashion doing him the honour of a visit. He seemed to me to be considered as a kind of public oracle, whom every body thought they had a right to visit and consult; and doubtless they were well rewarded. I never could discover how he found time for his compositions. He declaimed all the morning, then went to dinner at a tavern, where he commonly stayed late, and then drank his tea at some friend's house, over which he loitered a great while, but seldom took supper. I fancy he must have read and wrote chiefly in the night, for I can scarcely recollect that he ever refused going with me to a tavern, and he often went to Ranelagh, which he deemed a place of innocent recreation.

"He frequently gave all the silver in his pocket to the poor, who watched him between his house and the tavern where he dined. He walked the streets at all hours, and said he was never robbed, for the rogues knew he had little money, nor had the appearance of having much.

"Though the most accessible and communicative man alive, yet when he suspected he was invited to be exhibited, he constantly spurned the invitation.

"Two young women from Staffordshire visited him when I was present, to consult him on the subject of Methodism, to which they were inclined. 'Come,' said he, 'you pretty fools, dine with Maxwell and me

(1) No doubt Madame de Boufflers. See *post*, *sub an.* 1775.—C.

at the Mitre, and we will talk over that subject;' which they did, and after dinner he took one of them upon his knee, and fondled her for half an hour together."

"Upon a visit to me at a country lodging near Twickenham, he asked what sort of society I had there. I told him, but indifferent; as they chiefly consisted of opulent traders, retired from business. He said, he never much liked that class of people; 'For, Sir,' said he, 'they have lost the civility of tradesmen, without acquiring the manners of gentlemen.'

"Johnson was much attached to London (1): he observed, that a man stored his mind better there, than any where else; and that in remote situations a man's body might be feasted, but his mind was starved, and his faculties apt to degenerate, from want of exercise and competition. 'No place,' he said, 'cured a man's vanity or arrogance, so well as London; for as no man was either great or good *per se*, but as compared with others not so good or great, he was sure to find in the metropolis many his equals, and some his superiors.' He observed, that a man in London was in less danger of falling in love indiscreetly, than any where else; for there the difficulty of deciding between the conflicting pretensions of a vast variety of objects, kept him safe. He told me, that he had frequently been offered country preferment, if he would consent to take orders; but he could not leave the improved society of the capital, or consent to exchange the exhilarating joys and splendid

(1) Montaigne had the same affection for Paris, which Johnson had for London: — "Je l'aime tendrement," says he, in his Essay on Vanity, "jusque à ses verrues et à ses taches. Je ne suis François, que par cette grande cité, grande en peuples, grande en félicité de son assiette; mais sur tout grande et incomparable en variété et diversité des commodités: la gloire de la France, et l'un des plus nobles ornamens du monde." Vol. iii. p. 321. edit. Amsterdam, 1781. — BLAKEWAY.

decorations of public life, for the obscurity, insipidity and uniformity of remote situations.

"Speaking of Mr. Harte (1), Canon of Windsor, and writer of 'The History of Gustavus Adolphus,' he much commended him as a scholar, and a man of the most companionable talents he had ever known. He said, the defects in his history proceeded not from imbecility, but from foppery.

"He loved, he said, the old black-letter books; they were rich in matter, though their style was inelegant; wonderfully so, considering how conversant the writers were with the best models of antiquity.

"Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' he said, was the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise. (2)

"He frequently exhorted me to set about writing a History of Ireland; and archly remarked, there had been some good Irish writers, and that one Irishman might at least aspire to be equal to another. He had great compassion for the miseries and distresses of the Irish nation, particularly the Papists; and severely reprobated the barbarous debilitating policy of the British government, which, he said, was the most detestable mode of persecution. To a gentleman who hinted such policy might be necessary to support the authority of the English government, he replied by saying, 'Let the authority of the English government perish, rather than be maintained by iniquity. Better would it be to

(1) Walter Harte, born about 1707, A.M. of St. Mary Hall, in Oxford, was tutor to Lord Chesterfield's natural son, Mr. Stanhope, and was, by his Lordship's interest, made Canon of Windsor: he died in 1774. — C.

(2) ["Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy' is the most amusing and instructive medley of quotations and classical anecdotes I ever perused. If the reader has patience to go through his volumes, he will be more improved for literary conversation than by the perusal of any twenty other works with which I am acquainted." — BYRON, vol. i. p. 144.]

restrain the turbulence of the natives by the authority of the sword, and to make them amenable to law and justice by an effectual and vigorous police, than to grind them to powder by all manner of disabilities and incapacities. Better,' said he, 'to hang or drown people at once, than by an unrelenting persecution to beggar and starve them.' The moderation and humanity of the present times have, in some measure, justified the wisdom of his observations.

"Dr. Johnson was often accused of prejudices, nay, antipathy, with regard to the natives of Scotland. Surely, so illiberal a prejudice never entered his mind: and it is well known, many natives of that respectable country possessed a large share in his esteem: nor were any of them ever excluded from his good offices, as far as opportunity permitted. True it is, he considered the Scotch, nationally, as a crafty, designing people, eagerly attentive to their own interest, and too apt to overlook the claims and pretensions of other people. 'While they confine their benevolence, in a manner, exclusively to those of their own country, they expect to share in the good offices of other people. Now,' said Johnson, 'this principle is either right or wrong; if right, we should do well to imitate such conduct; if wrong, we cannot too much detest it.'

"Being solicited to compose a funeral sermon for the daughter of a tradesman, he naturally enquired into the character of the deceased; and being told she was remarkable for her humility and condescension to inferiors, he observed, that those were very laudable qualities, but it might not be so easy to discover who the lady's inferiors were.

"Of a certain player (1) he remarked, that his conversation usually threatened and announced more than it performed; that he fed you with a continual renova-

(1) No doubt Mr. Sheridan. — C.

tion of hope, to end in a constant succession of disappointment.

"When exasperated by contradiction, he was apt to treat his opponents with too much acrimony: as, 'Sir, you don't see your way through that question:'—'Sir, you talk the language of ignorance.' On my observing to him, that a certain gentleman had remained silent the whole evening, in the midst of a very brilliant and learned society, 'Sir,' said he, 'the conversation overflowed, and drowned him.'

"His philosophy, though austere and solemn, was by no means morose and cynical, and never blunted the laudable sensibilities of his character, or exempted him from the influence of the tender passions. Want of tenderness, he always alleged, was want of parts, and was no less a proof of stupidity than depravity.

"Speaking of Mr. Hanway, who published 'An Eight Days' Journey from London to Portsmouth,' 'Jonas,' said he, 'acquired some reputation by travelling abroad (1), but lost it all by travelling at home.'

"Of the passion of love he remarked, that its violence and ill effects were much exaggerated; for who knows any real sufferings on that head, more than from the exorbitancy of any other passion?

"He much commended 'Law's Serious Call,' (2) which, he said, was the finest piece of hortatory theology in any language. 'Law,' said he, 'fell latterly into the reveries of Jacob Behmen (3), whom Law alleged to

(1) He had published "An Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea, with Travels through Russia, Persia, Germany, and Holland." These travels contain very curious details of the then state of Persia. — C.

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 69.]

(3) A German fanatic, born near Görlitz, in Upper Lusatia, in 1575. He wrote a multitude of religious works, all very mystical. He probably was deranged, and died in an ecstatic vision in 1624. Mr. Law passed many of the latter years of his life in translating Behmen's works, four volumes of which were published after Mr. Law's death. — C.

have been somewhat in the same state with St. Paul, and to have seen *unutterable things*. Were it even so,' said Johnson, 'Jacob would have resembled St. Paul still more, by not attempting to utter them.'

"He observed, that the established clergy in general did not preach plain enough; and that polished periods and glittering sentences flew over the heads of the common people without any impression upon their hearts. Something might be necessary, he observed, to excite the affections of the common people, who were sunk in languor and lethargy, and therefore he supposed that the new concomitants of methodism might probably produce so desirable an effect. The mind, like the body, he observed, delighted in change and novelty, and, even in religion itself, courted new appearances and modifications. Whatever might be thought of some methodist teachers, he said he could scarcely doubt the sincerity of that man, who travelled nine hundred miles in a month, and preached twelve times in a week; for no adequate reward, merely temporal, could be given for such indefatigable labour.

"Of Dr. Priestley's theological works, he remarked, that they tended to unsettle every thing, and yet settled nothing.

"He was much affected by the death of his mother, and wrote to me to come and assist him to compose his mind; which, indeed, I found extremely agitated. He lamented that all serious and religious conversation was banished from the society of men, and yet great advantages might be derived from it. All acknowledged, he said, what hardly any body practised, the obligations we were under of making the concerns of eternity the governing principles of our lives. Every man, he observed, at last wishes for retreat: he sees his expectations frustrated in the world, and begins to wean himself from it, and to prepare for everlasting separation.

"He observed, that the influence of London now extended every where, and that from all manner of communication being opened, there shortly would be no remains of the ancient simplicity, or places of cheap retreat to be found.

"He was no admirer of blank verse, and said it always failed, unless sustained by the dignity of the subject. In blank verse, he said, the language suffered more distortion, to keep it out of prose, than any inconvenience or limitation to be apprehended from the shackles and circumspection of rhyme.

"He reproved me once for saying grace without mention of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hoped in future I would be more mindful of the apostolical injunction. (1)

"He refused to go out of a room before me at Mr. Langton's house, saying he hoped he knew his rank better than to presume to take place of a doctor in divinity. I mention such little anecdotes, merely to show the peculiar turn and habit of his mind.

"He used frequently to observe, that there was more to be endured than enjoyed, in the general condition of human life; and frequently quoted those lines of Dryden: —

'Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure from what still remain.'

For his part, he said, he never passed that week in his life which he would wish to repeat, were an angel to make the proposal to him.

"He was of opinion, that the English nation cultivated both their soil and their reason better than any other people; but admitted that the French, though not the highest, perhaps, in any department of literature, yet

(1) Alluding, probably, to Ephesians, ch. v. ver. 20.—"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." — C.

in every department were very high. Intellectual pre-eminence, he observed, was the highest superiority; and that every nation derived their highest reputation from the splendour and dignity of their writers. Voltaire, he said, was a good narrator, and that his principal merit consisted in a happy selection and arrangement of circumstances.

"Speaking of the French novels, compared with Richardson's, he said, they might be pretty baubles, but a wren was not an eagle.

"In a Latin conversation with the Père Boscovich (1), at the house of Mrs. Cholmondely, I heard him maintain the superiority of Sir Isaac Newton over all foreign philosophers (2), with a dignity and eloquence that surprised that learned foreigner. It being observed to him, that a rage for every thing English prevailed much in France after Lord Chatham's glorious war, he said, he did not wonder at it, for that we had drubbed those fellows into a proper reverence for us, and that their national petulance required periodical chastisement.

"Lord Lyttelton's Dialogues(3) he deemed a nugatory performance. 'That man,' said he, 'sat down to write a book, to tell the world what the world had all his life been telling him.'

"Somebody observing that the Scotch Highlanders, in the year 1745, had made surprising efforts, consider-

(1) See *post*, Dec. 1775, where Mr. Murphy states that this or a similar conversation took place in the house of Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury. — C.

(2) In a Discourse by Sir William Jones, addressed to the Asiatic Society, February 24. 1785, is the following passage: — "One of the most sagacious men in this age, who continues, I hope, to improve and adorn it, Samuel Johnson, remarked, in my hearing, that if Newton had flourished in ancient Greece, he would have been worshipped as a divinity." — M.

(3) We shall hereafter see more of Johnson's low opinion of Lord Lyttelton. — C.

ing their numerous wants and disadvantages; 'Yes sir,' said he, 'their wants were numerous: but you have not mentioned the greatest of them all—the want of law.'

"Speaking of the *inward light*, to which some methodists pretended, he said, it was a principle utterly incompatible with social or civil security. 'If a man,' said he, 'pretends to a principle of action of which I can know nothing, nay, not so much as that he has it, but only that he pretends to it; how can I tell what that person may be prompted to do? When a person professes to be governed by a written ascertained law, I can then know where to find him.'

"The poem of Fingal, he said, was a mere unconnected rhapsody, a tiresome repetition of the same images. 'In vain shall we look for the *lucidus ordo*, where there is neither end nor object, design or moral, *nec certa recurrit imago*.'

"Being asked by a young nobleman, what was become of the gallantry and military spirit of the old English nobility, he replied, 'Why, my lord, I'll tell you what is become of it: it is gone into the city to look for a fortune.'

"Speaking of a dull, tiresome fellow, whom he chanced to meet, he said, 'That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one.'

"Much inquiry having been made concerning a gentleman, who had quitted a company where Johnson was, and no information being obtained, at last Johnson observed, that 'he did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an *attorney*.'

"He spoke with much contempt of the notice taken of Woodhouse, the poetical shoemaker. (1) He said, it was all vanity and childishness; and that such objects

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 296.]

were, to those who patronised them, mere mirrors of their own superiority. 'They had better,' said he, 'furnish the man with good implements for his trade, than raise subscriptions for his poems. He may make an excellent shoemaker, but can never make a good poet. A schoolboy's exercise may be a pretty thing for a schoolboy; but it is no treat for a man.'

"Speaking of Boetius, who was the favourite writer of the middle ages, he said, it was very surprising that, upon such a subject, and in such a situation, he should be *magis philosophus quam Christianus.*

"Speaking of Arthur Murphy, whom he very much loved, 'I don't know,' said he, 'that Arthur can be classed with the very first dramatic writers; yet at present I doubt much whether we have any thing superior to Arthur.'

"Speaking of the national debt, he said, it was an idle dream to suppose that the country could sink under it. Let the public creditors be ever so clamorous, the interest of millions must ever prevail over that of thousands. (1)

"Of Dr. Kennicott's Collations (2) he observed, that though the text should not be much mended thereby, yet it was no small advantage to know that we had as

(1) He meant evidently that if the interest of *millions* — the country at large — required that the national debt should be sponged off, it would prevail over the interest of *thousands* — the holders of stock. — C.

(2) Dr. Benjamin Kennicott, — born in 1718, A.M., and Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, in 1750, and D.D. in 1760, — having distinguished himself by a learned dissertation on the state of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, was, about 1759, persuaded by Archbishop Secker, and encouraged by a large subscription, to undertake a collation of all the Hebrew MSS. of the Old Testament. The first volume of his learned labour was, however, not published till 1776; and the second, with a general dissertation, completed the work in 1783. He was Radcliffe librarian, and canon of Christ Church; in which cathedral he was buried in 1783. — C.

good a text as the most consummate industry and diligence could procure.

"Johnson observed, that so many objections might be made to every thing, that nothing could overcome them but the necessity of doing something. No man would be of any profession, as simply opposed to not being of it; but every one must do something.

"He remarked, that a London parish was a very comfortless thing: for the clergyman seldom knew the face of one out of ten of his parishioners.

"Of the late Mr. Mallet he spoke with no great respect: said, he was ready for any dirty job; that he had wrote against Byng at the instigation of the ministry, and was equally ready to write for him, provided he found his account in it.

"A gentleman who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died: Johnson said, it was the triumph of hope over experience.

"He observed, that a man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that.

"He did not approve of late marriages, observing that more was lost in point of time, than compensated for by any possible advantages. Even ill-assorted marriages were preferable to cheerless celibacy.

"Of old Sheridan he remarked, that he neither wanted parts nor literature; but that his vanity and Quixotism obscured his merits.

"He said, foppery was never cured; it was the bad stamina of the mind, which, like those of the body, were never rectified: once a coxcomb, and always a coxcomb.

"Being told that Gilbert Cooper called him the

Caliban of literature. 'Well,' said he, 'I must dub him the Punchinello.' (1)

"Speaking of the old Earl of Cork and Orrery, he said, 'that man spent his life in catching at an object (literary eminence), which he had not power to grasp.

"To find a substitution for violated morality, he said, was the leading feature in all perversions of religion.

"He often used to quote, with great pathos, those fine lines of Virgil: —

'Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit; subeunt morbi, tristisque senectus,
Et labor, et duræ rapit inclementia mortis.'

"Speaking of Homer, whom he venerated as the prince of poets (2), Johnson remarked, that the advice given to Diomed (3) by his father, when he sent him to the Trojan war, was the noblest exhortation that could be instanced in any heathen writer, and comprised in a single line: —

Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων:

which, if I recollect well, is translated by Dr. Clarke thus: — *semper appetere præstantissima, et omnibus aliis antecellere.*

(1) John Gilbert Cooper, Esq. author of a good deal of prose and verse, but best known as the author of a Life of Socrates, and a consequent dispute with Bishop Warburton. Cooper was in person short and squab; hence Johnson's allusion to *Punch.* He died in 1769. — C.

(2) Johnson's usual seal, at least at one time of his life, was a head of Homer, as appears from the envelopes of his letters. — C.

(3) Dr. Maxwell's memory has deceived him. Glaucus is the person who received this counsel; and Clarke's translation of the passage (Il. x. l. 208.) is as follows: — "Ut semper fortissime rem gererem, et superior virtute essem aliis." — J. Boswell, jun.

"He observed, 'it was a most mortifying reflection for any man to consider, *what he had done*, compared with what *he might have done*.'

"He said few people had intellectual resources sufficient to forego the pleasures of wine. They could not otherwise contrive how to fill the interval between dinner and supper.

"He went with me, one Sunday, to hear my old master, Gregory Sharpe (1), preach at the Temple. In the prefatory prayer, Sharpe ranted about *liberty*, as a blessing most fervently to be implored, and its continuance prayed for. Johnson observed, that our *liberty* was in no sort of danger:—he would have done much better to pray against our *licentiousness*.

"One evening at Mrs. Montagu's, where a splendid company was assembled, consisting of the most eminent literary characters, I thought he seemed highly pleased with the respect and attention that were shown him, and asked him, on our return home, if he was not highly *gratified* by his visit. 'No, Sir', said he, 'not highly *gratified*; yet I do not recollect to have passed many evenings *with fewer objections*.'

"Though of no high extraction himself, he had much respect for birth and family, especially among ladies. He said, 'adventitious accomplishments may be possessed by all ranks; but one may easily distinguish the *born gentlewoman*.'

"He said, 'the poor in England were better provided for than in any other country of the same extent: he did not mean little cantons, or petty republics. Where a great proportion of the people,' said he, 'are suffered to languish in helpless misery, that country must be ill

(1) Gregory Sharpe, D.D. F.R.S. and F.A.S., born in 1713. He published some religious works, and several critical Essays on the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages. Dr. Sharpe was Master of the Temple when Maxwell was assistant preacher. He died in 1771.—C.

policed, and wretchedly governed: a decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilisation. Gentlemen of education,' he observed, 'were pretty much the same in all countries; the condition of the lower orders, the poor especially, was the true mark of national discrimination.'

"When the corn laws were in agitation in Ireland, by which that country has been enabled not only to feed itself, but to export corn to a large amount, Sir Thomas Robinson (1) observed, that those laws might be prejudicial to the corn-trade of England. 'Sir Thomas,' said he, 'you talk the language of a savage: what, Sir, would you prevent any people from feeding themselves, if by any honest means they can do it?'

"It being mentioned, that Garrick assisted Dr. Browne (2), the author of the 'Estimate,' in some dramatic composition, 'No, Sir,' said Johnson; 'he would no more suffer Garrick to write a line in his play, than he would suffer him to mount his pulpit.'

"Speaking of Burke, he said, 'It was commonly observed he spoke too often in parliament; but nobody could say he did not speak well, though too frequently and too familiarly.'

"Speaking of economy, he remarked, it was hardly worth while to save anxiously twenty pounds a year. If a man could save to that degree, so as to enable him to assume a different rank in society, then, indeed, it might answer some purpose.

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 219.]

(2) Dr. John Browne, born in 1715, A.B. of St. John's, Cambridge, in 1735, and D.D. in 1755; besides his celebrated "Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times,"— a work which, in one year, ran through seven editions, and is now forgotten,—and several religious and miscellaneous works, he was the author of two tragedies, "Barbarossa" and "Athelstan." He was a man of considerable, but irregular genius; and he died insane, by his own hand, in 1766.—C.

"He observed, a principal source of erroneous judgment was viewing things partially and only on *one side;* as for instance, *fortune-hunters,* when they contemplated the fortunes *singly* and *separately,* it was a dazzling and tempting object; but when they came to possess the wives and their fortunes *together,* they began to suspect they had not made quite so good a bargain.

"Speaking of the late Duke of Northumberland (1) living very magnificently when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, somebody remarked, it would be difficult to find a suitable successor to him: 'then,' exclaimed Johnson, '*he is only fit to succeed himself.*'

"He advised me, if possible, to have a good orchard. He knew, he said, a clergyman of small income, who brought up a family very reputably, which he chiefly fed with apple dumplings. (2)

"He said he had known several good scholars among the Irish gentlemen; but scarcely any of them correct in *quantity.* He extended the same observation to Scotland.

"Speaking of a certain prelate (3), who exerted himself very laudably in building churches and parsonage-houses; 'however,' said he, 'I do not find that he is esteemed a man of much professional learning, or a liberal patron of it;—yet, it is well where a man

(1) Sir Hugh Smithson, who became second Earl of Northumberland of the new creation, was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland from 1763 to 1765; he was created a duke in 1766. — C.

(2) This seems a strange resource. Perhaps Dr. Maxwell, at the interval of so many years, did not perfectly recollect Dr. Johnson's statement. — C.

(3) Probably Dr. Richard Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland from 1765 to 1795. He was created Lord Rokeby in 1777, with remainder to the issue of his cousin, Matthew Robinson, of West Layton, two of whose sons have successively succeeded to that title. He built what is called Canterbury Gate, and the adjacent quadrangle, in Christ Church, Oxford. — C.

possesses any strong positive excellence. Few have all kinds of merit belonging to their character. We must not examine matters too deeply. No, Sir, a *fallible being will fail somewhere.*'

"Talking of the Irish clergy, he said, 'Swift was a man of great parts, and the instrument of much good to his country. Berkeley was a profound scholar, as well as a man of fine imagination; but Usher,' he said, 'was the great luminary of the Irish church; and a greater,' he added, 'no church could boast of; at least in modern times.'

"We dined *tête-à-tête* at the Mitre, as I was preparing to return to Ireland, after an absence of many years. I regretted much leaving London, where I had formed many agreeable connections: 'Sir,' said he, 'I don't wonder at it: no man, fond of letters, leaves London without regret. But remember, Sir, you have seen and enjoyed a great deal;—you have seen life in its highest decorations, and the world has nothing new to exhibit. No man is so well qualified to leave public life as he who has long tried it and known it well. We are always hankering after untried situations, and imagining greater felicity from them than they can afford. No, Sir, knowledge and virtue may be acquired in all countries, and your local consequence will make you some amends for the intellectual gratifications you relinquish.' Then he quoted the following lines with great pathos:—

"'He who has early known the pomps of state,
(For things unknown 'tis ignorance to condemn;)
And after having view'd the gaudy bait,
Can boldly say, the trifle I contemn;
With such a one contented could I live,
Contented could I die.'(1)

(1) Being desirous to trace these verses to the fountain head, after having in vain turned over several of our elder poets with the hope of lighting on them, I applied to Dr. Maxwell, now

"He then took a most affecting leave of me; said, he knew it was a point of *duty* that called me away. — 'We shall all be sorry to lose you,' said he: '*laudo tamen*.'"

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resident at Bath, for the purpose of ascertaining their author: but that gentleman could furnish no aid on this occasion. At length the lines have been discovered by the author's second son, Mr. James Boswell, in the London Magazine for July, 1732, where they form part of a poem on Retirement, there published anonymously, but in fact (as he afterwards found) copied, with some slight variations, from one of Walsh's smaller poems, entitled "The Retirement;" and they exhibit another proof of what has been elsewhere observed by the author of the work before us, that Johnson retained in his memory fragments of obscure or neglected poety. In quoting verses of that description, he appears by a slight variation to have sometimes given them a moral turn, and to have dexterously adapted them to his own sentiments, where the original had a very different tendency. Thus, in the present instance (as Mr. J. Boswell observes to me), "the author of the poem above mentioned exhibits himself as having retired to the country, to avoid the vain follies of a town life, — ambition, avarice, and the pursuit of pleasure, contrasted with the enjoyments of the country, and the delightful conversation that the brooks, &c. furnish; which he holds to be infinitely more pleasing and instructive than any which towns afford. He is then led to consider the weakness of the human mind, and, after lamenting that he (the writer) who is neither enslaved by avarice, ambition, or pleasure, has yet made himself a slave to *love*, he thus proceeds. —

'If this dire passion never will be done,
  If beauty always must my heart enthral,
O, rather let me be enslaved by *one*,
  Than madly thus become a slave to all;

'One *who has early known the power of time*
  (*For things unknown 'tis ignorance to condemn*),
And, after having view'd the gaudy bait,
  Can coldly *say, the trifle I contemn*;

'In her blest arms *contented could I live*,
  Contented could I die. But O, my mind
Imaginary scenes of bliss deceive
  With hopes of joys impossible to find.'"

Another instance of Johnson's retaining in his memory verses by obscure authors is given [*post*, Aug. 27. 1773], where, in

consequence of hearing a girl spinning in a chamber over that in which he was sitting, he repeated these lines, which he said were written by one Giffard, a clergymen; but the poem in which they are introduced has hitherto been undiscovered: —

> "Verse sweetens toil, however rude the sound:
> All at her work the village maiden sings;
> Nor while she turns the giddy wheel around,
> Revolves the sad vicissitude of things."

In the autumn of 1782, when he was at Brighthelmstone, he frequently accompanied Mr. Philip Metcalfe in his chaise, to take the air; and the conversation in one of their excursions happening to turn on a celebrated historian (1), since deceased, he repeated, with great precision, some verses, as very characteristic of that gentleman. These furnish another proof of what has been above observed; for they are found in a very obscure quarter, among some anonymous poems appended to the second volume of a collection frequently printed by Lintot, under the title of "Pope's Miscellanies:" —

> "See how the wand'ring Danube flows,
> Realms and religions parting;
> A friend to all true christian foes,
> To Peter, Jack, and Martin.
>
> "Now Protestant, and Papist now,
> Not constant long to either,
> At length an infidel does grow,
> And ends his journey neither.
>
> "Thus many a youth I've known set out,
> Half Protestant, half Papist,
> And rambling long the world about,
> Turn infidel or atheist."

In reciting these verses, I have no doubt that Johnson substituted some word for *infidel* in the second stanza, to avoid the disagreeable repetition of the same expression. — MALONE.

(1) [No doubt Gibbon.]

CHAPTER VI.

1771.

"Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands." — Lord George Grenville. — Junius. — Design of bringing Johnson into Parliament. — Mr. Strahan. — Lord North. — Mr. Flood. — Boswell's Marriage. — Visit to Lichfield and Ashbourne. — Dr. Beattie. — Lord Monboddo. — St. Kilda. — Scots Church. — Second Sight. — The Thirty-nine Articles. — Thirtieth of January. — Royal Marriage Act. — Old Families. — Mimickry. — Foote. — Mr. Peyton. — Origin of Languages. — Irish and Gaelic. — Flogging at Schools. — Lord Mansfield. — Sir Gilbert Elliot.

In 1771 he published another political pamphlet, entitled "Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands," in which, upon materials furnished to him by ministry, and upon general topics, expanded in his rich style, he successfully endeavoured to persuade the nation that it was wise and laudable to suffer the question of right to remain undecided, rather than involve our country in another war. It has been suggested by some, with what truth I shall not take upon me to decide, that he rated the consequence of those islands to Great Britain too low. But however this may be, every humane mind must surely applaud the earnestness

with which he averted the calamity of war; a calamity so dreadful, that it is astonishing how civilised, nay, Christian nations, can deliberately continue to renew it. His description of its miseries, in this pamphlet, is one of the finest pieces of eloquence in the English language. Upon this occasion, too, we find Johnson lashing the party in opposition with unbounded severity, and making the fullest use of what he ever reckoned a most effectual argumentative instrument, — contempt. His character of their very able mysterious champion, Junius, is executed with all the force of his genius, and finished with the highest care. He seems to have exulted in sallying forth to single combat against the boasted and formidable hero, who bade defiance to "principalities and powers, and the rulers of this world." (1)

This pamphlet, it is observable, was softened in one particular, after the first edition; for the conclusion of Mr. George Grenville's character stood thus: "Let him not, however, be depreciated in his grave. He had powers not universally possessed: could he have enforced payment of the Manilla ransom *he could have counted it.*" Which, instead of retaining its sly sharp point, was reduced to a mere flat unmeaning expression, or, if I may use the word, — *truism:* "He had powers not universally possessed:

(1) He often delighted his imagination with the thoughts of having destroyed Junius. One day I had received a remarkably fine Stilton cheese as a present from some person who had packed and directed it carefully, but without mentioning whence it came. Mr. Thrale, desirous to know who they were obliged to, asked every friend as they came in, but nobody owned it. "Depend upon it, Sir," says Johnson, "it was sent by *Junius.*" — Piozzi.

and if he sometimes erred, he was likewise sometimes right."

LETTER 128. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

"March 20. 1771.

"DEAR SIR,—After much lingering of my own, and much of the ministry, I have, at length, got out my paper. But delay is not yet at an end. Not many had been dispersed, before Lord North ordered the sale to stop. His reasons I do not distinctly know. You may try to find them in the perusal. Before his order, a sufficient number were dispersed to do all the mischief, though, perhaps, not to make all the sport that might be expected from it.

"Soon after your departure, I had the pleasure of finding all the danger past with which your navigation was threatened. I hope nothing happens at home to abate your satisfaction; but that Lady Rothes (1), and Mrs. Langton and the young ladies, are all well.

"I was last night at the Club. Dr. Percy has written a long ballad in many *fits*; it is pretty enough. He has printed, and will soon publish it. Goldsmith is at Bath, with Lord Clare. (2) At Mr. Thrale's, where I

(1) Mr. Langton married, May 24. 1770, Jane Lloyd, widow of John, eighth Earl of Rothes, who died in 1767.—M.

(2) Robert Nugent, an Irish gentleman, who married the sister and heiress of Secretary Craggs. He was created, in 1767, Baron Nugent and Viscount Clare, and in 1777, Earl Nugent. His only daughter married the first Marquis of Buckingham, on whose second son the title of Baron Nugent devolved. Lord Nugent wrote some odes and light pieces, which had some merit and a great vogue. He died in 1788. Goldsmith addressed to him his lively verses called "The Haunch of Venison." The characters exhibited in this piece are very comic, and were no doubt drawn from nature; but Goldsmith ought to have confessed that he had borrowed the idea and some of the details from Boileau.—C.

am now writing, all are well. I am, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON." (1)

Mr. Strahan, the printer, who had been long in intimacy with Johnson, in the course of his literary labours, who was at once his friendly agent in receiving his pension for him, and his banker in supplying him with money when he wanted it; who was himself now a member of parliament, and who loved much to be employed in political negotiation; thought he should do eminent service, both to government and Johnson, if he could be the means of his getting a seat in the House of Commons. With this view, he wrote a letter to one of the

(1) One evening, in the oratorio season of 1771, Mr. Johnson went with me to Covent Garden; and though he was for the most part an exceeding bad playhouse companion, as his person drew people's eyes upon the box, and the loudness of his voice made it difficult to hear any body but himself, he sat surprisingly quiet, and I flattered myself that he was listening to the music. When we got home, however, he repeated these verses, which he said he had made at the oratorio:—

IN THEATRO.

Tertii verso quater orbe lustri,
Quid theatrales tibi, Crispe, pompæ?
Quam decet canos male litteratos
Sera voluptas!

Tene mulceri fidibus canoris?
Tene cantorum modulis stupere?
Tene per pictas, oculo elegante,
Currere formas?

Inter æquales, sine felle liber,
Codices, veri studiosus, inter,
Rectius vives: sua quisque carpat
Gaudia gratus.

Lusibus gaudet puer otiosus,
Luxus oblectat juvenem theatri,
At seni, fluxo sapienter uti
Tempore restat.—PIOZZI.

Secretaries of the Treasury (1), of which he gave me a copy in his own handwriting, which is as follows:—

LETTER 119. FROM MR. STRAHAN TO ——.

"New Street, March 30. 1771.

"SIR,—You will easily recollect, when I had the honour of waiting upon you some time ago, I took the liberty to observe to you, that Dr. Johnson would make an excellent figure in the House of Commons, and heartily wished he had a seat there. My reasons are briefly these:

"I know his perfect good affection to his Majesty and his government, which I am certain he wishes to support by every means in his power.

"He possesses a great share of manly, nervous, and ready eloquence; is quick in discerning the strength and weakness of an argument; can express himself with clearness and precision, and fears the face of no man alive.

"His known character, as a man of extraordinary sense and unimpeached virtue, would secure him the attention of the House, and could not fail to give him a proper weight there.

"He is capable of the greatest application, and can undergo any degree of labour, where he sees it necessary, and where his heart and affections are strongly engaged. His Majesty's ministers might therefore securely depend on his doing, upon every proper occasion, the utmost that could be expected from him. They would find him ready to vindicate such measures as tended to promote the stability of government, and resolute and steady in carrying them into execution. Nor is any

(1) The secretaries of the treasury, at this time, were Sir Grey Cooper and James West, Esq.—C.

thing to be apprehended from the supposed impetuosity of his temper. To the friends of the king you will find him a lamb, to his enemies a lion.

"For these reasons, I humbly apprehend that he would be a very able and useful member. And I will venture to say, the employment would not be disagreeable to him; and knowing, as I do, his strong affection to the king, his ability to serve him in that capacity, and the extreme ardour with which I am convinced he would engage in that service, I must repeat, that I wish most heartily to see him in the House.

"If you think this worthy of attention, you will be pleased to take a convenient opportunity of mentioning it to Lord North. If his lordship should happily approve of it, I shall have the satisfaction of having been, in some degree, the humble instrument of doing my country, in my opinion, a very essential service. I know your good-nature, and your zeal for the public welfare, will plead my excuse for giving you this trouble. I am, with the greatest respect, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

"William Strahan."

This recommendation, we know, was not effectual; but how, or for what reason, can only be conjectured. (1) It is not to be believed that Mr. Strahan would have applied, unless Johnson had approved of it. I never heard him mention the subject; but at a later period of his life, when Sir Joshua Reynolds told him that Mr. Edmund Burke had said, that if

(1) Lord Stowell has told me, that it was understood amongst Johnson's friends that "Lord North was afraid that Johnson's *help* (as he himself said of Lord Chesterfield's) might have been sometimes *embarrassing*." "He perhaps thought, and not unreasonably," added Lord Stowell, "that, like the elephant in the battle, he was quite as likely to trample down his friends as his foes." — C.

he had come early into parliament, he certainly would have been the greatest speaker that ever was there, Johnson exclaimed, "I should like to try my hand now."

It has been much agitated among his friends and others, whether he would have been a powerful speaker in parliament, had he been brought in when advanced in life. I am inclined to think, that his extensive knowledge, his quickness and force of mind, his vivacity and richness of expression, his wit and humour, and above all, his poignancy of sarcasm, would have had great effect in a popular assembly; and that the magnitude of his figure, and striking peculiarity of his manner, would have aided the effect. But I remember it was observed by Mr. Flood, that Johnson, having been long used to sententious brevity, and the short flights of conversation, might have failed in that continued and expanded kind of argument, which is requisite in stating complicated matters in public speaking; and, as a proof of this, he mentioned the supposed speeches in parliament written by him for the magazine, none of which, in his opinion, were at all like real debates. The opinion of one who was himself so eminent an orator, must be allowed to have great weight. It was confirmed by Sir William Scott [Lord Stowell], who mentioned, that Johnson had told him, that he had several times tried to speak in the Society of Arts and Sciences, but "had found he could not get on." (1) From Mr. William Gerard Hamilton I

(1) Dr. Kippis, however (Biog. Brit. art. "J. Gilbert Cooper," p. 266., n. new edit.), says, that he "once heard Dr.

have heard, that Johnson, when observing to him that it was prudent for a man who had not been accustomed to speak in public, to begin his speech in as simple a manner as possible, acknowledged that he rose in that society to deliver a speech which he had prepared; "but," said he, "all my flowers of oratory forsook me." I however cannot help wishing, that he *had* "tried his hand" in Parliament; and I wonder that ministry did not make the experiment. (1)

Johnson speak in the Society of Arts and Manufactures, upon a subject relative to mechanics, with a propriety, perspicuity, and energy, which excited general admiration."—M. I cannot give credit to Dr Kippis's account against Johnson's own statement, vouched by Lord Stowell and Mr. Hamilton; but even if we could, one speech in the Society of Arts was no test of what Johnson might have been able to do in parliament; and it may be suspected that, at the age of sixty-two, he, with all his talents, would have failed to acquire that peculiar tact and dexterity, without which even great abilities do not succeed in that very fastidious assembly.—C.

(1) The publication of Johnson's political tracts exhibited him to the world in a new character. he ceased now to be considered as one who, having been more conversant with books than with men, knew little of active life, the views of parties, or the artifices of designing men on the contrary, they discovered that he had, by the force of his own genius, and the observations he had made on the history of our own and other countries, attained to such skill in the grand leading principles of political science, as are seldom acquired by those in the most active and important stations, even after long experience, and that, whatever opinions he might have formed on this subject, he had ability by strong reasoning to defend, and by a manly and convincing eloquence to enforce. Mr. Thrale, a man of slow conceptions, but of a sound judgment, was not one of the last that discerned in his friend this talent, and believing that the exercise of it might redound to the benefit of the public, entertained a design of bringing Johnson into parliament. We must suppose that he had previously determined to furnish him with a legal qualification, and Johnson, it is certain, was willing to accept the trust. Mr. Thrale had two meetings with the minister, who, at first, seemed inclined to find him a seat, but,

TO MISS LANGTON.

"London, April 17. 1771.

"MADAM, — If I could have flattered myself that my letters could have given pleasure, or have alleviated pain, I should not have omitted to write to a lady to whom I do sincerely wish every increase of pleasure, and every mitigation of uneasiness.

"I knew, dear madam, that a very heavy affliction (1) had fallen upon you; but it was one of those which the established course of nature makes necessary, and to which kind words give no relief. Success is, on these occasions, to be expected only from time.

"Your censure of me, as deficient in friendship, is therefore too severe. I have neither been unfriendly, nor intentionally uncivil. The notice with which you have honoured me, I have neither forgotten, nor remembered without pleasure. The calamity of ill health, your brother will tell you that I have had, since I saw you, sufficient reason to know and to pity. But this is another evil against which we can receive little help from one another. I can only advise you, and I advise you with great earnestness, to do nothing that may hurt you, and to reject nothing that may do you good. To preserve health is a moral and religious duty: for health is the basis of all social virtues; we can be useful no longer than while we are well.

"If the family knows that you receive this letter, you will be pleased to make my compliments. I flatter myself with the hopes of seeing Langton after Lady

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whether upon conversation he doubted his fitness for his purpose, or that he thought himself in no need of his assistance, the project failed. Johnson was a little soured at this disappointment: he spoke of Lord North in terms of severity. — HAWKINS.

(1) Probably, the death of her aunt, the elder Miss Langton. — C.

Rothes's recovery; and then I hope that you and I shall renew our conferences, and that I shall find you willing as formerly to talk and to hear; and shall be again admitted to the honour of being, madam, your most obedient and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

I at length renewed a correspondence which had been too long discontinued:—

LETTER 131. TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, April 18. 1771.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I can now fully understand those intervals of silence in your correspondence with me which have often given me anxiety and uneasiness; for although I am conscious that my veneration and love for Mr. Johnson have never in the least abated, yet I have deferred for almost a year and a half to write to him."

In the subsequent part of this letter, I gave him an account of my comfortable life as a married man (1), and a lawyer in practice at the Scotch bar; invited him to Scotland, and promised to attend him to the Highlands and Hebrides.

(1) Mr. Boswell had married, in November, 1769, Miss Margaret Montgomerie, of the family of the Montgomeries of Lainshawe, who were baronets, and claimed the peerage of Lyle. Dr. Johnson says of this lady to Mrs. Thrale, in a letter from Auchinleck, August 23. 1773:—"Mrs. B. has the mien and manner of a gentlewoman, and such a person and mind as would not in any place either be admired or condemned. She is in a proper degree inferior to her husband: she cannot rival him, nor can he ever be ashamed of her.—C.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, June 20. 1771.

"DEAR SIR,—If you are now able to comprehend that I might neglect to write without diminution of affection, you have taught me, likewise, how that neglect may be uneasily felt without resentment. I wished for your letter a long time, and when it came, it amply recompensed the delay. I never was so much pleased as now with your account of yourself; and sincerely hope, that between public business, improving studies, and domestic pleasures, neither melancholy nor caprice will find any place for entrance. Whatever philosophy may determine of material nature, it is certainly true of intellectual nature, that it *abhors a vacuum*: our minds cannot be empty; and evil will break in upon them, if they are not pre-occupied by good. My dear Sir, mind your studies, mind your business, make your lady happy, and be a good Christian. After this,

'——————*tristitiam et metus*
'*Tradam protervis in mare Creticum*
'*Portare ventis.*'

"If we perform our duty, we shall be safe and steady, '*Sive per*,' &c. whether we climb the Highlands, or are tost among the Hebrides; and I hope the time will come when we may try our powers both with cliffs and water. I see but little of Lord Elibank (1), I know not why; perhaps by my own fault. I am this day going into Staffordshire and Derbyshire for six weeks. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate, and most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) Patrick Murray, fifth Lord Elibank. He had been in the army, and served as a colonel in the expedition against Carthagena in 1740. He was a man of wit and talents, and wrote some tracts relative to the statistics and history of Scotland. He died in 1778. — C.

Letter 13[illegible]. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Lichfield, June 22. 1771.

"Last night I came safe to Lichfield; this day I was visited by Mrs. Cobb. This afternoon I went to Mrs. Aston, where I found Miss T[urton], and waited on her home. Miss T[urton] wears spectacles, and can hardly climb the stiles. I was not tired at all, either last night or to-day. Miss Porter is very kind to me. Her dog and cats are all well.

"Ashbourne, July 3. 1771.

"Last Saturday I came to Ashbourne;—Ashbourne in the Peak. Let not the barren name of the Peak terrify you; I have never wanted strawberries and cream. The great bull has no disease but age. I hope in time to be like the great bull; and hope you will be like him too a hundred years hence.

"Ashbourne, July 7. 1771.

"Poor Dr. Taylor is ill, and under my government; you know that the art of government is learned by obedience; I hope I can govern very tolerably. The old rheumatism is come again into my face and mouth, but nothing yet to the lumbago; however, having so long thought it gone, I do not like its return. Miss Porter was much pleased to be mentioned in your letter, and is sure that I have spoken better of her than she deserved. She holds that both Frank and his master are much improved. The master, she says, is not half so *lounging* and *untidy* as he was; there was no such thing last year as getting him out of his chair.

"Ashbourne, July 2. 1771.

"Dr. Taylor is better, and is gone out in the chase. My rheumatism is better too. I would have been glad to go to Hagley, in compliance with Mr. Lyttelton's (1)

(1) The uncle of Lord Lyttelton, who lived near Hagley. —C.

kind invitation, for, beside the pleasure of his company, I should have had the opportunity of recollecting past times, and wandering *per montes notos*(1) *et flumina nota*, of recalling the images of sixteen, and reviewing my conversations with poor Ford. (2) But this year will not bring this gratification within my power. I promised Taylor a month. Every thing is done here to please me; and his health is a strong reason against desertion."

LETTER 134. TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,

In Leicester Fields.

"Ashbourne, July 17. 1771.

"DEAR SIR, — When I came to Lichfield, I found that my portrait (3) had been much visited, and much admired. Every man has a lurking wish to appear considerable in his native place; and I was pleased with the dignity conferred by such a testimony of your regard.

"Be pleased, therefore, to accept the thanks of, Sir, your most obliged, and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Compliments to Miss Reynolds."

LETTER 135. TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, July 27. 1771.

"MY DEAR SIR, — The bearer of this, Mr. Beattie, professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen, is desirous of being introduced to your acquaintance. His genius

(1) Thus in Mrs. Thrale's book. — C.

(2) Cornelius Ford, his mother's nephew. — Piozzi.

(3) The second portrait of Johnson, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with his arms raised and his hands bent. It was at this time, it is believed, in the possession of Miss Lucy Porter. — M. — It is now the property of the Duke of Sutherland. — C.

and learning, and labours in the service of virtue and religion, render him very worthy of it; and as he has a high esteem of your character, I hope you will give him a favourable reception. I ever am, &c.

"James Boswell."

Letter 136. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Lichfield, Saturday, Aug. 3. 1771.

"Having stayed my month with Taylor, I came away on Wednesday, leaving him, I think, in a disposition of mind not very uncommon, at once weary of my stay, and grieved at my departure. My purpose was to have made haste to you and Streatham; and who would have expected that I should have been stopped by Lucy? Hearing me give Francis orders to take in places, she told me that I should not go till after next week. I thought it proper to comply; for I was pleased to find that I could please, and proud of showing you that I do not come an universal outcast. Lucy is likewise a very peremptory maiden; and if I had gone without permission, I am not very sure that I might have been welcome at another time."

Letter 137. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.,

At Langton.

"August 29. 1771.

"Dear Sir, — I am lately returned from Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The last letter mentions two others which you have written to me since you received my pamphlet. Of these two I never had but one, in which you mentioned a design of visiting Scotland, and, by consequence, put my journey to Langton out of my thoughts. My summer wanderings are now over, and, I am engaging in a very great work, the revision of my Dictionary; from which I know not, at present, how to get loose. If you have observed, or been told, any

errors or omissions, you will do me a great favour by letting me know them.

"Lady Rothes, I find, has disappointed you and herself. Ladies will have these tricks. The Queen and Mrs. Thrale, both ladies of experience, yet both missed their reckoning this summer. I hope, a few months will recompense your uneasiness.

"Please to tell Lady Rothes how highly I value the honour of her invitation, which it is my purpose to obey as soon as I have disengaged myself. In the mean time I shall hope to hear often of her ladyship, and every day better news and better, till I hear that you have both the happiness, which to both is very sincerely wished, by, Sir, your most affectionate, and most humble servant, SAM. JOHNSON."

In October I again wrote to him, thanking him for his last letter, and his obliging reception of Mr Beattie; informing him that I had been at Alnwick lately, and had good accounts of him from Dr. Percy. (1)

[LETTER 138. TO DAVID GARRICK, ESQ. (2)

"Streatham, Dec. 12. 1771.

"DEAR SIR,—I have thought upon your epitaph (3) but without much effect. An epitaph is no easy thing.

(1) In October, 1771, John Bell, Esq. of Hertfordshire, a gentleman with whom he had maintained a long and strict friendship, had the misfortune to lose his wife, and wished Johnson, from the outlines of her character, which he should give him, and his own knowledge of her worth, to compose a monumental inscription for her: he returned the husband thanks for the confidence he placed in him, and acquitted himself of the task in a fine eulogium, now to be seen in the parish church of Watford in Hertfordshire.—HAWKINS.

(2) [From the original in Mr. Upcott's collection.]

(3) [The Epitaph on Hogarth. See *ante*, Vol. II. p. 164.]

"Of your three stanzas, the third is utterly unworthy of you. The first and third together give no discriminative character. If the first alone were to stand, Hogarth would not be distinguished from any other man of intellectual eminence. Suppose you worked upon something like this:

"The Hand of Art here torpid lies
That traced the essential form of Grace,
Here Death has closed the curious eyes
That saw the manners in the face.

"If Genius warm thee, Reader, stay,
If Merit touch thee, shed a tear;
Be Vice and Dulness far away!
Great Hogarth's honour'd dust is here."

"In your second stanza, *pictured morals* is a beautiful expression, which I would wish to retain; but *learn* and *mourn* cannot stand for rhymes. *Art and nature* have been seen together too often. In the first stanza is *feeling*, in the second *feel*. *Feeling* for *tenderness* or *sensibility* is a word merely colloquial, of late introduction, not yet sure enough of its own existence to claim a place upon a stone. *If thou hast neither*, is quite prose, and prose of the familiar kind. Thus easy is it to find faults, but it is hard to make an Epitaph.

"When you have reviewed it, let me see it again: you are welcome to any help that I can give, on condition that you make my compliments to Mrs. Garrick. I am, dear Sir, your most, &c.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."]

In his religious record of this year we observe that he was better than usual, both in body and mind, and better satisfied with the regularity of his conduct. But he is still "trying his ways" too rigorously. He charges himself with not rising early enough; yet he mentions what was surely a suffi-

cient excuse for this, supposing it to be a duty seriously required, as he all his life appears to have thought it:—"One great hindrance is want of rest; my nocturnal complaints grow less troublesome towards morning; and I am tempted to repair the deficiencies of the night." Alas! how hard would it be, if this indulgence were to be imputed to a sick man as a crime. In his retrospect on the following Easter-eve, he says, "When I review the last year, I am able to recollect so little done, that shame and sorrow, though perhaps too weakly, come upon me." Had he been judging of any one else in the same circumstances, how clear would he have been on the favourable side. How very difficult, and in my opinion almost constitutionally impossible it was for him to be raised early, even by the strongest resolutions, appears from a note in one of his little paper-books, (containing words arranged for his Dictionary,) written, I suppose, about 1753:—"I do not remember that, since I left Oxford, I ever rose early by mere choice, but once or twice at Edial, and two or three times for the Rambler." (1) I think he had fair ground enough to have quieted his mind on the subject, by concluding that he was physically incapable of what is at best but a commodious regulation.

In 1772 he was altogether quiescent as an author, but it will be found, from the various evidences which I shall bring together, that his mind was acute, lively, and vigorous.

(1) And "for the Rambler," it could hardly have been "by mere choice." — C.

LETTER 139. TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"Feb. 27. 1772.

"DEAR SIR,—Be pleased to send to Mr. Banks, whose place of residence I do not know, this note, which I have sent open, that, if you please, you may read it. When you send it, do not use your own seal. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 140. TO JOSEPH BANKS, ESQ.

"Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, Feb. 27. 1772.

"Perpetua ambitâ bis terrâ præmia lactis
Hæc habet altrici Capra secunda Jovis. (1)

"SIR,—I return thanks to you and to Dr. Solander, for the pleasure which I received in yesterday's conversation. I could not recollect a motto for your Goat, but have given her one. You, Sir, may perhaps have an epic poem from some happier pen than, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 141. FROM MR. BOSWELL.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is hard that I cannot prevail on you to write to me oftener. But I am convinced that it is in vain to expect from you a private correspondence with any regularity. I must, therefore, look upon you as a fountain of wisdom, from whence few rills are communicated to a distance, and which must be approached at its source, to partake fully of its virtues.

(1) Thus translated by a friend:—

"In fame scarce second to the nurse of Jove,
This Goat, who twice the world had traversed round,
Deserving both her master's care and love,
Ease and perpetual pasture now has found."

"I am coming to London soon, and am to appear in an appeal from the Court of Session in the House of Lords. A schoolmaster in Scotland was, by a court of inferior jurisdiction, deprived of his office, for being somewhat severe in the chastisement of his scholars. The Court of Session, considering it to be dangerous to the interest of learning and education, to lessen the dignity of teachers, and make them afraid of too indulgent parents, instigated by the complaints of their children, restored him. His enemies have appealed to the House of Lords, though the salary is only twenty pounds a year. I was counsel for him here. I hope there will be little fear of a reversal; but I must beg to have your aid in my plan of supporting the decree. It is a general question, and not a point of particular law. I am, &c. JAMES BOSWELL."

LETTER 142. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"March 15, 1772.

"DEAR SIR,—That you are coming so soon to town I am very glad; and still more glad that you are coming as an advocate. I think nothing more likely to make your life pass happily away, than that consciousness of your own value, which eminence in your profession will certainly confer. If I can give you any collateral help, I hope you do not suspect that it will be wanting. My kindness for you has neither the merit of singular virtue, nor the reproach of singular prejudice. Whether to love you be right or wrong, I have many on my side: Mrs. Thrale loves you, and Mrs. Williams loves you, and, what would have inclined me to love you, if I had been neutral before, you are a great favourite of Dr. Beattie.

"Of Dr. Beattie I should have thought much, but that his lady puts him out of my head; she is a very lovely woman.

"The ejection which you come hither to oppose, appears very cruel, unreasonable, and oppressive. I should think there could not be much doubt of your success.

"My health grows better, yet I am not fully recovered. I believe it is held, that men do not recover very fast after threescore. I hope yet to see Beattie's college: and have not given up the western voyage. But however all this may be or not, let us try to make each other happy when we meet, and not refer our pleasure to distant times or distant places.

"How comes it that you tell me nothing of your lady? I hope to see her some time, and till then shall be glad to hear of her. I am, dear Sir, &c.

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 143. TO BENNET LANGTON, ESQ.

At Langton.

"March 14 1772.

"Dear Sir,— I congratulate you and Lady Rothes on your little man, and hope you will all be many years happy together. Poor Miss Langton can have little part in the joy of her family. She this day called her aunt Langton to receive the sacrament with her; and made me talk yesterday on such subjects as suit her condition. It will probably be her *viaticum*. I surely need not mention again that she wishes to see her mother. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

On the 21st of March, I was happy to find myself again in my friend's study, and was glad to see my old acquaintance, Mr. Francis Barber, who was now returned home. Dr. Johnson received me with a hearty welcome; saying, "I am glad you are come, and glad you are come upon such an errand:" (al-

luding to the cause of the schoolmaster.") BOSWELL. "I hope, Sir, he will be in no danger. It is a very delicate matter to interfere between a master and his scholars: nor do I see how you can fix the degree of severity that a master may use." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, till you can fix the degree of obstinacy and negligence of the scholars, you cannot fix the degree of severity of the master. 'Severity must be continued until obstinacy be subdued, and negligence be cured." He mentioned the severity of Hunter, his own master. "Sir," said I, "Hunter is a Scotch name: so it should seem this schoolmaster who beat you so severely was a Scotchman. I can now account for your prejudice against the Scotch." JOHNSON. "Sir, he was not Scotch; and, abating his brutality, he was a very good master."

We talked of his two political pamphlets, "The False Alarm," and "Thoughts concerning Falkland's Islands." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, which of them did you think the best?" BOSWELL. "I liked the second best." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I liked the first best; and Beattie liked the first best. Sir, there is a subtlety of disquisition in the first, that is worth all the fire of the second." BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, is it true that Lord North paid you a visit, and that you got two hundred a year in addition to your pension?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir. Except what I had from the bookseller, I did not get a farthing by them. And, between you and me, I believe Lord North is no friend to me."(1) BOSWELL. "How so,

(1) [See antè, p. 158.]

Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you cannot account for the fancies of men. Well, how does Lord Elibank? and how does Lord Monboddo?" BOSWELL. "Very well, Sir. Lord Monboddo(1) still maintains the superiority of the savage life." JOHNSON. "What strange narrowness of mind now is that, to think the things we have not known, are better than the things which we have known." BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, that is a common prejudice." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, but a common prejudice should not be found in one whose trade it is to rectify error."

A gentleman having come in who was to go as a mate in the ship along with Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, Dr. Johnson asked what were the names of the ships destined for the expedition.(2) The gentleman answered, they were once to be called the Drake and the Raleigh, but now they were to be called the Resolution and the Adventure. JOHN-

(1) James Burnet, born at the family seat of Monboddo, in 1714, called to the Scottish bar in 1738, and advanced to be a lord of session, on the death of his relation Lord Milton, in 1767, by the title of Lord Monboddo, was, in private life, as well as in his literary career, a humorist; the learning and acuteness of his various works are obscured by his love of singularity and paradox. He died of a paralytic stroke, at his house in Edinburgh, May 26. 1799. — C.

He was a devout believer in the virtues of the heroic ages, and the deterioration of civilised mankind, a great contemner of luxuries, insomuch that he never used a wheel carriage. It should be added, that he was a gentleman of the most amiable disposition, and the strictest honour and integrity. — WALTER SCOTT.

(2) There was no person in the capacity of *mate* in either of these ships. Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander did not go with this expedition. The reason which they alleged for abandoning the intention will be found in the Annual Register for 1772, p. 108. — C.

SON. "Much better; for had the Raleigh returned without going round the world, it would have been ridiculous. To give them the names of the Drake and the Raleigh was laying a trap for satire." BOSWELL. "Had not you some desire to go upon this expedition, Sir?" JOHNSON. "Why yes, but I soon laid it aside. Sir, there is very little of intellectual, in the course. Besides, I see but at a small distance. So it was not worth my while to go to see birds fly, which I should not have seen fly; and fishes swim, which I should not have seen swim."

The gentleman being gone, and Dr. Johnson having left the room for some time, a debate arose between the Rev. Mr. Stockdale and Mrs. Desmoulins, whether Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander were entitled to any share of glory from their expedition. When Dr. Johnson returned to us, I told him the subject of their dispute. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it was properly for botany that they went out: I believe they thought only of culling of simples."

I thanked him for showing civilities to Beattie. "Sir," said he, "I should thank *you*. We all love Beattie. Mrs. Thrale says, if ever she has another husband, she'll have Beattie. He sunk upon us (1)

(1) *Dr. Beattie to Mr. Boswell.*

"Edinburgh, May 3. 1792.

"My dear Sir, — As I suppose your great work will soon be reprinted, I beg leave to trouble you with a remark on a passage of it, in which I am a little misrepresented. Be not alarmed; the misrepresentation is not imputable to you. Not having the book at hand, I cannot specify the page, but I suppose you will easily find it. Dr. Johnson says, speaking of Mrs. Thrale's family, "Dr. Beattie *sunk upon us* that he was married, or words to that purpose." I am not sure that I understand *sunk upon us*, which is a very uncommon phrase: but it seems to me to imply, (and others, I find, have understood it in the same sense,) *studiously concealed from us his being married*. Now, Sir, this was by no means the case. I could have

that he was married; else we should have shown his lady more civilities. She is a very fine woman. But how can you show civilities to a nonentity? I did not think he had been married. Nay, I did not think about it one way or other; but he did not tell us of his lady till late."

He then spoke of St. Kilda, the most remote of the Hebrides. I told him, I thought of buying it. JOHNSON. "Pray do, Sir. We will go and pass a winter amid the blasts there. We shall have fine fish, and we will take some dried tongues with us, and some books. We will have a strong built vessel, and some Orkney men to navigate her. We must build a tolerable house: but we may carry with us a wooden house ready made, and requiring nothing but to be put up. Consider, Sir, by buying St. Kilda, you may keep the people from falling into worse hands. We must give them a clergyman,

no motive to conceal a circumstance, of which I never was nor can be ashamed; and of which Mr. Johnson seemed to think, when he afterwards became acquainted with Mrs. Beattie, that I had, as was true, reason to be proud. So far was I from concealing her, that my wife had at that time almost as numerous an acquaintance in London as I had myself; and was, not very long after, kindly invited and elegantly entertained at Streatham by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. My request, therefore, is, that you would rectify this matter in your new edition. You are at liberty to make what use you please of this letter. My best wishes ever attend you and your family. Believe me to be, with the utmost regard and esteem, dear Sir, &c.,

"J. BEATTIE."

I have, from my respect for my friend Dr. Beattie, and regard to his extreme sensibility, inserted the foregoing letter, though I cannot but wonder at his considering as any imputation a phrase commonly used among the best friends. — B. — Dr. Beattie was, perhaps, the more sensitive on this point, as he must have been, at the time he wrote, conscious that there was something that might give a colour to such an imputation. It became known, shortly after the date of this letter, that the mind of poor Mrs. Beattie had become deranged, and she passed the last years of her life in confinement. — C.

and he shall be one of Beattie's choosing. He shall be educated at Marischal College. I'll be your Lord Chancellor, or what you please." BOSWELL. "Are you serious, Sir, in advising me to buy St. Kilda? for if you should advise me to go to Japan, I believe I should do it." JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir, I am serious." BOSWELL. "Why then, I'll see what can be done."

I gave him an account of the two parties in the church of Scotland, those for supporting the rights of patrons, independent of the people, and those against it. JOHNSON. "It should be settled one way or other. I cannot wish well to a popular election of the clergy, when I consider that it occasions such animosities, such unworthy courting of the people, such slanders between the contending parties, and other disadvantages. It is enough to allow the people to remonstrate against the nomination of a minister for solid reasons." (I suppose he meant heresy or immorality.)

He was engaged to dine abroad, and asked me to return to him in the evening, at nine, which I accordingly did.

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams, who told us a story of second sight, which happened in Wales where she was born. He listened to it very attentively, and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated. His elevated wish for more and more evidence for spirit, in opposition to the groveling belief of materialism, led him to a love of such mysterious disquisitions. He again justly observed, that we could have no cer-

tainty of the truth of supernatural appearances, unless something was told us which we could not know by ordinary means, or something done which could not be done but by supernatural power (1); that Pharaoh in reason and justice required such evidence from Moses; nay, that our Saviour said, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." He had said in the morning, that "Macaulay's History of St. Kilda" was very well written, except some foppery about liberty and slavery. I mentioned to him that Macaulay told me, he was advised to leave out of his book the wonderful story that upon the approach of a stranger all the inhabitants catch cold (2); but that it had been so well authenticated, he determined to retain it. JOHNSON. "Sir, to leave things out of a book, merely because people tell you they will not be believed, is meanness. Macaulay acted with more magnanimity."

(1) This is the true distinction; and if Johnson had on all occasions abided by this text, he would have escaped the ridicule and regret which he often occasioned by the appearance, if not the reality, of superstitious credulity. When he said, "that all ages and all nations believe" in these supernatural manifestations (*antè*, Vol. II. p. 106.); and again, "that they are so frequent that they cannot be called fortuitous" (*antè*, Vol. II. p. 313.), he should have given us the instances in which any thing was clearly and undoubtedly *done*, which could *only* have been done by supernatural power. *Appearances*, without supernatural *facts*, are nothing: they may be dreams or disease. Every one sees visions in his sleep, and every body knows that the sick see them in their paroxysms; and there are some cases (such as that of Nicolai, the Berlin bookseller), in which persons, awake and not *otherwise* disordered in mind, have "thick-coming fancies," and see what, if real, would be supernatural; but where, we must again ask, is there in the profane history of the world one well-attested supernatural *fact*? — C.

(2) See *antè*, p. 41.

We talked of the Roman Catholic religion, and how little difference there was in essential matters between ours and it. JOHNSON. "True, Sir; all denominations of Christians have really little difference in point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms. There is a prodigious difference between the external form of one of your Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and the church in Italy; yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same."

I mentioned the petition to parliament for removing the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. (1) JOHNSON. "It was soon thrown out. Sir, they talk of not making boys at the University subscribe to what they do not understand; but they ought to consider, that our Universities were founded to bring up members for the Church of England, and

(1) This was a petition drawn up by Mr. Francis Blackburn, who, though an archdeacon of the Church of England, had published several works against her discipline and peculiar doctrines: the petition was presented on the 6th of February, and, after an animated debate, rejected (not being even allowed to lie on the table) by 217 voices against 71. Mr. Gibbon thus notices this debate, in a letter to Lord Sheffield:— "I congratulate you on the late victory of our dear mamma, the Church of England. She had, last Thursday (Feb. 6.), 71 rebellious sons, who pretended to set aside her will, on account of insanity; but 217 worthy champions, headed by Lord North, Burke, Hans Stanley, Charles Fox, Godfrey Clarke, &c. supported the validity of it with infinite humour. By the by, Charles Fox prepared himself for that holy war, by passing twenty-two hours in the pious exercise of hazard: his devotion only cost him 500*l.* per hour; in all 11,000*l.*" Misc. Works, vol. ii. p. 74. The argument which seemed to make most effect in the House, was against requiring subscription from every youth entering the University, of whatever age, or intended for whatever profession. To this point Johnson's observation particularly alludes. — C.

we must not supply our enemies with arms from our arsenal. No, Sir, the meaning of subscribing is, not that they fully understand all the articles, but that they will adhere to the church of England. Now take it in this way, and suppose that they should only subscribe their adherence to the church of England, there would be still the same difficulty; for still the young men would be subscribing to what they do not understand. For if you should ask them, what do you mean by the church of England? Do you know in what it differs from the Presbyterian church? from the Romish church? from the Greek church? from the Coptic church? they could not tell you. So, Sir, it comes to the same thing." BOSWELL. "But, would it not be sufficient to subscribe the Bible?" JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; for all sects will subscribe the Bible; nay, the Mahometans will subscribe the Bible; for the Mahometans acknowledge Jesus Christ, as well as Moses, but maintain that God sent Mahomet as a still greater prophet than either.

I mentioned the motion which had been made in the House of Commons, to abolish the fast of the 30th of January. (1) JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I could have wished that it had been a temporary act, per-

(1) Dr. Nowell had preached, as usual, before the House on the 30th of January, and had been thanked for his sermon. Some days afterwards, Mr. Thomas Townshend complained of certain unconstitutional passages in the sermon; and on the 21st of February, after a debate, the thanks were ordered to be expunged from the Journals; and on the 2d of March, Mr. Frederic Montague moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the observance of that day altogether. This motion was rejected by 125 to 97. — C.

haps, to have expired with the century. I am against abolishing it; because that would be declaring it wrong to establish it; but I should have no objection to make an act, continuing it for another century, and then letting it expire."

He disapproved of the Royal Marriage bill; "because," said he, "I would not have the people think that the validity of marriage depends on the will of man, or that the right of a king depends on the will of man. I should not have been against making the marriage of any of the royal family without the approbation of king and parliament, highly criminal." (1)

In the morning we had talked of old families, and the respect due to them. JOHNSON. "Sir, you have a right to that kind of respect, and are arguing for yourself. I am for supporting the principle, and am disinterested in doing it, as I have no such right." BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, it is one more incitement to a man to do well." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and it is a matter of opinion, very necessary to keep society together. What is it but opinion, by which we have a respect for authority, that prevents us, who are the rabble, from rising up and pulling down you who are gentlemen from your places, and saying 'We will be gentlemen in our turn?' Now, Sir, that respect

(1) It is not very easy to understand Dr. Johnson's objection as above stated. Does not the validity of *all marriages* "depend on the will of man," that is, are there not in all civilised nations certain legal *formulæ* and conditions, requisite to constitute a marriage? If all human institutions are to be disregarded, what is marriage? And as to the indefeasible rights of kings, see Johnson's opinions, *antè*, Vol. II. pp. 207, 215, 445.; and finally, if it be competent to the legislature to make an act *highly criminal*, does not that imply a competency to forbid it altogether? — C.

for authority is much more easily granted to a man whose father has had it, than to an upstart, and so society is more easily supported." BOSWELL. "Perhaps, Sir, it might be done by the respect belonging to office, as among the Romans, where the dress, the *toga*, inspired reverence." JOHNSON. "Why, we know very little about the Romans. But, surely, it is much easier to respect a man who has always had respect, than to respect a man who we know was last year no better than ourselves, and will be no better next year. In republics there is no respect for authority, but a fear of power." BOSWELL. "At present, Sir, I think riches seem to gain most respect." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, riches do not gain hearty respect; they only procure external attention. A very rich man, from low beginnings, may buy his election in a borough; but, *cæteris paribus*, a man of family will be preferred. People will prefer a man for whose father their fathers have voted, though they should get no more money, or even less. That shows that the respect for family is not merely fanciful, but has an actual operation. If gentlemen of family would allow the rich upstarts to spend their money profusely, which they are ready enough to do, and not vie with them in expense, the upstarts would soon be at an end, and the gentlemen would remain; but if the gentlemen will vie in expense with the upstarts, which is very foolish, they must be ruined." (1)

(1) Though a man of obscure birth himself, Dr. Johnson's partiality to people of family was visible on every occasion; his zeal for subordination warm even to bigotry; his hatred to innovation, and reverence for the old feudal times, apparent, whenever any possible manner of showing them occurred. — PIOZZI.

I gave him an account of the excellent mimicry of a friend (1) of mine in Scotland; observing, at the same time, that some people thought it a very mean thing. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is making a very mean use of man's powers. But to be a good mimic, requires great powers; great acuteness of observation, great retention of what is observed, and great pliancy of organs, to represent what is observed. I remember a lady of quality in this town, Lady ——, who was a wonderful mimic, and used to make me laugh immoderately. I have heard she is now gone mad." BOSWELL. "It is amazing how a mimic can not only give you the gestures and voice of a person whom he represents, but even what a person would say on any particular subject." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider that the manner and some particular phrases of a person do much to impress you with an idea of him, and you are not sure that he would say what the mimic says in his character." BOSWELL. "I don't think Foote a good mimic, Sir." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; his imitations are not like. He gives you something different from himself, but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out of himself, without going into other people. He cannot take off any person unless he is strongly marked, such as George Faulkner.(2) He is like a painter who can draw

(1) This friend was Mr. Cullen, advocate, son of the celebrated physician, afterwards a judge, by the name of Lord Cullen. — C. 1835.

(2) [The printer of the Dublin Journal. "In his portraits of Faulkner, Foote found the only sitter, whom his extravagant pencil could not caricature; for he had a solemn intrepidity of

the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who therefore is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, Foote can hop upon one leg. But he has not that nice discrimination which your friend seems to possess. Foote is, however, very entertaining with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery."

On Monday, March 23., I found him busy, preparing a fourth edition of his folio Dictionary. Mr Peyton, one of his original amanuenses, was writing for him. I put him in mind of a meaning of the word *side*, which he had omitted, viz. relationship; as father's side, mother's side. He inserted it. I asked him if *humiliating* was a good word. He said, he had seen it frequently used, but he did not know it to be legitimate English. He would not admit *civilization*, but only *civility*. With great deference to him I thought *civilization*, from *to civilize*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*; as it is better to have a distinct word for each sense, than one word with two senses, which *civility* is, in his way of using it. (1)

He seemed also to be intent on some sort of chemical operation. I was entertained by observing how

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egotism, and a daring contempt of absurdity, that fairly outfaced imitation. George prosecuted Foote for lampooning him on the Dublin stage; his counsel, the prime-serjeant, compared him to Socrates, and his libeller to Aristophanes; this, I believe, was all George got by his course of law. He died in 1775."—CUMBERLAND.]

(1) [*Civilization* has been introduced into Todd's edition of the Dictionary; but he gives no older authorities than Robertson and Warton.]

he contrived to send Mr. Peyton (1) on an errand, without seeming to degrade him:—"Mr. Peyton, Mr. Peyton, will you be so good as to take a walk to Temple-Bar? You will there see a chemist's shop, at which you will be pleased to buy for me an ounce of oil of vitriol; not spirit of vitriol, but oil of vitriol. It will cost three half-pence." Peyton immediately went, and returned with it, and told him it cost but a penny.

I then reminded him of the Schoolmaster's cause, and proposed to read to him the printed papers concerning it. "No, Sir," said he, "I can read quicker than I can hear." So he read them to himself.

After he had read for some time, we were interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Kristrom, a Swede, who was tutor to some young gentlemen in the city. He told me, that there was a very good History of Sweden by Daline. Having at that time an intention of writing the history of that country, I asked Dr. Johnson whether one might write a history of Sweden without going thither. "Yes, Sir," said he, "one for common use."

We talked of languages. Johnson observed that Leibnitz had made some progress in a work tracing all languages up to the Hebrew. "Why, Sir," said he, "you would not imagine that the French *jour*, day, is derived from the Latin *dies*, and yet nothing is more certain; and the intermediate steps are very clear. From *dies*, comes *diurnus*. *Diu* is, by inaccurate ears, or inaccurate pronunciation,

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 216.]

easily confounded with *giu*; then the Italians form a substantive of the ablative of an adjective, and thence *giurno*, or, as they make it *giorno*: which is readily contracted into *giour*, or *jour*." He observed, that the Bohemian language was true Sclavonic. The Swede said, it had some similarity with the German. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, to be sure, such parts of Sclavonia as confine with Germany will borrow German words; and such parts as confine with Tartary will borrow Tartar words.

He said, he never had it properly ascertained that the Scotch Highlanders and the Irish understood each other. (1) I told him that my cousin, Colonel Graham, of the Royal Highlanders, whom I met at Drogheda, told me they did. JOHNSON. "Sir, if the Highlanders understood Irish, why translate the New Testament into Erse, as was lately done at Edinburgh, when there is an Irish translation." BOSWELL. "Although the Erse and Irish are both dialects of the same language, there may be a good deal of diversity between them, as between the different dialects in Italy." The Swede went away, and Mr. Johnson continued his reading of the papers. I said, "I am afraid, Sir, it is troublesome." "Why, Sir," said he, "I do not take much delight in it; but I'll go through it."

We went to the Mitre, and dined in the room where he and I first supped together. He gave me

(1) There is no doubt the languages are the same, and the difference in pronunciation and construction not very considerable. The *Erse* or *Earsh* is the *Irish*, and the race called *Scots* came originally from Ulster." — SIR WALTER SCOTT.

great hopes of my cause. "Sir," said he, "the government of a schoolmaster is somewhat of the nature of military government; that is to say, it must be arbitrary, — it must be exercised by the will of one man, according to particular circumstances. You must show some learning upon this occasion. You must show, that a schoolmaster has a prescriptive right to beat; and that an action of assault and battery cannot be admitted against him unless there is some great excess, some barbarity. This man has maimed none of his boys. They are all left with the full exercise of their corporeal faculties. In our schools in England, many boys have been maimed; yet I never heard of an action against a schoolmaster on that account. Puffendorff, I think, maintains the right of a schoolmaster to beat his scholars."

CHAPTER VII.

1772.

Sir A. Macdonald. — Choice of Chancellors. — Lord Coke. — Lord Mansfield. — Scotch Accent. — Pronunciation. — Etymology. — Disembodied Spirits. — Ghost Stories. — Mrs. Veal. — Gray, Mason, and Akenside. — Swearing. — Warton's Essay on Pope. — Ranelagh. — Luxury. — Inequality of Livings. — Hon. Thomas Erskine. — Fielding and Richardson. — Coriat's Crudities. — Gaming. — Earl of Buchan. — Attachment in Families. — Feudal System. — Cave's Ghost Story. — Witches.

On Saturday, March 27., I introduced to him Sir Alexander Macdonald (1), with whom he had expressed a wish to be acquainted. He received him very courteously.

Sir Alexander observed, that the Chancellors in England are chosen from views much inferior

(1) Next brother of Sir James Macdonald, whom Mr. Boswell calls the Marcellus of Scotland, and whom the concurrent testimony of his contemporaries proves to have been a very extraordinary young man. He died at Rome in 1766. (See *post*, Sept. 5. 1773.) Sir Alexander succeeded his brother as eighth Baronet, and was created an Irish Baron, by the title of Lord Macdonald, in 1776. The late Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Sir Archibald Macdonald, was their youngest brother. We shall see more of Sir Alexander under the year 1773, during the Tour to the Hebrides. — C.

to the office, being chosen from temporary political views. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, in such a government as ours, no man is appointed to an office because he is the fittest for it, nor hardly in any other government; because there are so many connections and dependencies to be studied. A despotic prince may choose a man to an office, merely because he is the fittest for it. The king of Prussia may do it." SIR A. "I think, Sir, almost all great lawyers, such at least as have written upon law, have known only law, and nothing else." JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; Judge Hale was a great lawyer, and wrote upon law; and yet he knew a great many other things, and has written upon other things. Selden too." SIR A. "Very true, Sir; and Lord Bacon. But was not Lord Coke a mere lawyer?" JOHNSON. "Why, I am afraid he was; but he would have taken it very ill if you had told him so. He would have prosecuted you for scandal." BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield is not a mere lawyer." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I never was in Lord Mansfield's company; but Lord Mansfield was distinguished at the University. Lord Mansfield, when he first came to town, 'drank champagne with the wits,' as Prior says. He was the friend of Pope." (1) SIR A. "Barristers, I believe, are not so abusive now as they were for-

(1) He was one of his executors. The large space which (thanks to Mr. Boswell) Dr. Johnson occupies in our estimate of the society of his day, makes it surprising that he should never have been in company with Lord Mansfield; but Boswell was disposed to over-rate the extent and rank of Johnson's acquaintance. — C.

merly. (1) I fancy they had less law long ago, and so were obliged to take to abuse, to fill up the time. Now they have such a number of precedents, they have no occasion for abuse." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, they had more law long ago than they have now. As to precedents, to be sure they will increase in course of time; but the more precedents there are, the less occasion is there for law; that is to say, the less occasion is there for investigating principles." SIR A. "I have been correcting several Scotch accents in my friend Boswell. I doubt, Sir, if any Scotchman ever attains to a perfect English pronunciation." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, few of them do, because they do not persevere after acquiring a certain degree of it. But, Sir, there can be no doubt that they may attain to a perfect English pronunciation, if they will. We find how near they come to it; and certainly, a man who conquers nineteen parts of the Scottish accent, may conquer the twentieth. But, Sir, when a man has got the better of nine tenths he grows weary, he relaxes his diligence, he finds he has corrected his accent so far as not to be disagreeable, and he no longer desires his friends to tell him when he is wrong; nor does he choose to be told. Sir, when people watch me narrowly, and I do not watch myself, they will find me out to be of a particular county. In the same manner, Dunning may be found out to be a Devonshire man. So most Scotchmen may be found

(1) The general tone of society is probably improved in this respect, and barristers are more men of the world, and mix more in polite company than at the times Sir A. Macdonald alluded to. — C.

out. But, Sir, little aberrations are of no disadvantage. I never catched Mallet in a Scotch accent; and yet Mallet, I suppose, was past five-and-twenty before he came to London."

Upon another occasion I talked to him on this subject, having myself taken some pains to improve my pronunciation, by the aid of the late Mr. Love(1), of Drury Lane theatre, when he was a player at Edinburgh, and also of old Mr. Sheridan. Johnson said to me "Sir, your pronunciation is not offensive." With this concession I was pretty well satisfied; and let me give my countrymen of North Britain an advice not to aim at absolute perfection in this respect; not to speak *High English*, as we are apt to call what is far removed from the *Scotch*, but which is by no means *good English*, and makes "the fools who use it" truly ridiculous. Good English is plain, easy, and smooth in the mouth of an unaffected English gentleman. A studied and factitious pronunciation, which requires perpetual attention, and imposes perpetual constraint, is exceedingly disgusting. A small intermixture of provincial peculiarities may, perhaps, have an agreeable effect, as the notes of different birds concur in the harmony of the grove, and please more than if they were all exactly alike. I could name some gentlemen of Ireland, (2) to whom a slight proportion of the

(1) Love was an assumed name. He was the son of Mr. Dance, the architect. He resided many years at Edinburgh as manager of the theatre: he removed, in 1762, to Drury Lane, and died in 1771. — C.

(2) Mr. Boswell probably included, in this observation, Mr. Burke; who, to the last, retained more of the Irish accent than was agreeable to less indulgent ears. — C.

accent and recitative of that country is an advantage. The same observation will apply to the gentlemen of Scotland. I do not mean that we should speak as broad as a certain prosperous member of parliament from that country (1); though it has been well observed, that "it has been of no small use to him, as it rouses the attention of the House by its uncommonness; and is equal to tropes and figures in a good English speaker." I would give as an instance of what I mean to recommend to my countrymen, the pronunciation of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot (2); and may I presume to add that of the present Earl of Marchmont (3), who told me, with great good humour, that the master of a shop in London, where he was not known, said to him, "I suppose, Sir, you are an American." "Why so, Sir?" said his Lordship. "Because, Sir," replied the shopkeeper, "you speak neither English nor Scotch, but something different from both, which I conclude is the language of America."

BOSWELL. "It may be of use, Sir, to have a Dictionary to ascertain the pronunciation." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, my Dictionary shows you the

(1) Mr. Dundas, successively Lord Advocate, Secretary of State, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Viscount Melville, whose accent, and many of whose phrases, were to the last peculiarly national. — C.

(2) The third Baronet, father of the first Lord Minto; a gentleman of distinction in the political, and not unknown in the poetical, world: he died in 1777. — C. [Sir Gilbert Elliot wrote the beautiful pastoral ballad quoted in the notes to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, "Why left I Aminta!" &c.]

(3) Hugh, fourth Earl of Marchmont, the friend and executor of Pope; born in 1708, died in 1794. — C.

accent of words, if you can but remember them." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, we want marks to ascertain the pronunciation of the vowels. Sheridan, I believe, has finished such a work." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, consider how much easier it is to learn a language by the ear, than by any marks. Sheridan's Dictionary may do very well; but you cannot always carry it about with you: and, when you want the word, you have not the Dictionary. It is like a man who has a sword that will not draw. It is an admirable sword, to be sure: but while your enemy is cutting your throat, you are unable to use it. Besides, Sir, what entitles Sheridan to fix the pronunciation of English? He has, in the first place, the disadvantage of being an Irishman; and if he says he will fix it after the example of the best company, why, they differ among themselves. I remember an instance; when I published the plan for my Dictionary, Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state;* and Sir William Yonge (1) sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat*, and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait*. Now, here were two men of the highest rank, the one, the best speaker in the House of Lords, the other, the best speaker in the House of Commons, differing entirely."*

I again visited him at night. Finding him in a

(1) Sir William Yonge, Secretary at War in Sir Robert Walpole's administration, and therefore very odious to Pope, who makes frequent depreciating allusions to him. He died in 1755.—C.

very good humour, I ventured to lead him to the subject of our situation in a future state, having much curiosity to know his notions on that point. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the happiness of an unembodied spirit will consist in a consciousness of the favour of God, in the contemplation of truth, and in the possession of felicitating ideas." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, is there any harm in our forming to ourselves conjectures as to the particulars of our happiness, though the Scripture has said but very little on the subject? 'We know not what we shall be.'" JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no harm. What philosophy suggests to us on this topic is probable: what Scripture tells us is certain. Dr. Henry More(1) has carried it as far as philosophy can. You may buy both his theological and philosophical works in two volumes folio, for about eight shillings." BOSWELL. "One of the most pleasing thoughts is, that we shall see our friends again."(2) JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but you must consider, that when we are become purely rational, many of our friendships will be cut off. Many friendships are formed by a community

(1) Called the Platonist, on account of his voluminous efforts to blend the Platonic philosophy with Christianity. He, Van Helmont, and Valentine Greatrakes, all mystics in their several professions, were patronised by Anne Finch, Lady Conway, (herself a mystic), and all resided for some time in her house at Ragley, where there is a portrait of Van Helmont, and where were found, by Mr. Walpole, several letters of Dr. More. — C.

(2) Bishop Hall, in his Epistle, "discoursing of the different degrees of heavenly glory, and of our mutual knowledge of each other above," holds the affirmative on both these questions. — M. See *ante*, Vol. II. p. 311.

of sensual pleasures: all these will be cut off. We form many friendships with bad men, because they have agreeable qualities, and they can be useful to us; but, after death, they can no longer be of use to us. We form many friendships by mistake, imagining people to be different from what they really are. After death, we shall see every one in a true light. Then, Sir, they talk of our meeting our relations: but then all relationship is dissolved; and we shall have no regard for one person more than another, but for their real value. However, we shall either have the satisfaction of meeting our friends, or be satisfied without meeting them." BOSWELL. "Yet, Sir, we see in scripture, that Dives still retained an anxious concern about his brethren." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, we must either suppose that passage to be metaphorical, or hold, with many divines and all the Purgatorians, that departed souls do not all at once arrive at the utmost perfection of which they are capable." BOSWELL. "I think, Sir, that is a very rational supposition." JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; but we do not know it is a true one. There is no harm in believing it: but you must not compel others to make it an article of faith; for it is not revealed." BOSWELL. "Do you think, Sir, it is wrong in a man who holds the doctrine of Purgatory, to pray for the souls of his deceased friends." JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir." BOSWELL. "I have been told, that in the liturgy of the episcopal church of Scotland, there was a form of prayer for the dead." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not in the liturgy which Laud framed for the

episcopal church of Scotland: if there is a liturgy older than that, I should be glad to see it." BOSWELL. "As to our employment in a future state, the sacred writings say little. The Revelation, however, of St. John gives us many ideas, and particularly mentions music." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, ideas must be given you by means of something which you know: and as to music, there are some philosophers and divines who have maintained, that we shall not be spiritualised to such a degree, but that something of matter, very much refined, will remain. In that case, music may make a part of our future felicity." (1)

BOSWELL. "I do not know whether there are any well-attested stories of the appearance of ghosts. You know there is a famous story of the appearance of Mrs. Veal, prefixed to 'Drelincourt on Death.'" JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, that is given up: I believe the woman declared upon her death-bed that it was a lie."(2) BOSWELL. "This objection is made against the truth of ghosts appearing: that if they are in a state of happiness, it would be a punishment to them to return to this world; and if they are in a state of misery, it would be giving them a respite." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, as the

(1) See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 166. — C.

(2) This fiction is known to have been invented by Daniel Defoe, and was added to the second edition of the English translation of Drelincourt's work (which was originally written in French), to make it sell. The first edition had it not. — M. [See Sir Walter Scott's Life of Defoe, Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 267.]

happiness or misery of embodied spirits does not depend upon place, but is intellectual, we cannot say that they are less happy or less miserable by appearing upon earth."

We went down between twelve and one to Mrs. Williams's room, and drank tea. I mentioned that we were to have the remains of Mr. Gray, in prose and verse, published by Mr. Mason. JOHNSON. "I think we have had enough of Gray. I see they have published a splendid edition of Akenside's works. One bad ode may be suffered; but a number of them together makes one sick." BOSWELL. "Akenside's distinguished poem is his 'Pleasures of Imagination;' but for my part, I never could admire it so much as most people do." JOHNSON. "Sir, I could not read it through." BOSWELL. "I have read it through; but I did not find any great power in it."

I mentioned Elwal, the heretic, whose trial(1) Sir John Pringle had given me to read. JOHNSON. "Sir, Mr. Elwal was, I think, an ironmonger at Wolverhampton; and he had a mind to make himself famous, by being the founder of a new sect, which he wished much should be called *Elwallians*. He held, that every thing in the Old Testament that was not typical, was to be of perpetual observance; and so he wore a riband in the plaits of his coat, and he also wore a beard. I remember I had the honour of dining in company with Mr. Elwal. There was

(1) "The Triumph of Truth; being an Account of the Trial of E. Elwal for Heresy and Blasphemy, 8vo. Lond." This is rather the rambling declamation of an enthusiast, than the account of a trial. — C.

one Barter, a miller, who wrote against him; and you had the controversy between Mr. Elwal and Mr. Barter. To try to make himself distinguished, he wrote a letter to King George the Second, challenging him to dispute with him, in which he said, 'George, if you be afraid to come by yourself, to dispute with a poor old man, you may bring a thousand of your *black*-guards with you; and if you should still be afraid, you may bring a thousand of your *red*-guards.' The letter had something of the impudence of Junius to our present King. But the men of Wolverhampton were not so inflammable as the common council of London; so Mr. Elwal failed in his scheme of making himself a man of great consequence."

On Tuesday, March 31., he and I dined at General Paoli's. A question was started, whether the state of marriage was natural to man. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is so far from being natural for a man and woman to live in a state of marriage, that we find all the motives which they have for remaining in that connection, and the restraints which civilised society imposes to prevent separation, are hardly sufficient to keep them together." The General said, that in a state of nature a man and woman uniting together would form a strong and constant affection, by the mutual pleasure each would receive; and that the same causes of dissention would not arise between them, as occur between husband and wife in a civilised state. JOHNSON. "Sir, they would have dissentions enough, though of another kind. One would choose to go a hunting in this wood, the other

in that; one would choose to go a fishing in this lake, the other in that; or, perhaps, one would choose to go a hunting, when the other would choose to go a fishing; and so they would part. Besides, Sir, a savage man and a savage woman meet by chance: and when the man sees another woman that pleases him better, he will leave the first."

We then fell into a disquisition, whether there is any beauty independent of utility. The General maintained there was not. Dr. Johnson maintained that there was; and he instanced a coffee cup which he held in his hand, the painting of which was of no real use, as the cup would hold the coffee equally well if plain; yet the painting was beautiful.

We talked of the strange custom of swearing in conversation. The General said, that all barbarous nations swore from a certain violence of temper, that could not be confined to earth, but was always reaching at the powers above. He said, too, that there was greater variety of swearing, in proportion as there was a greater variety of religious ceremonies.

Dr. Johnson went home with me to my lodgings in Conduit Street and drank tea, previous to our going to the Pantheon, which neither of us had seen before.

He said, "Goldsmith's Life of Parnell is poor; not that it is poorly written, but that he had poor materials; for nobody can write the life of a man, but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him."

I said, that if it was not troublesome and presuming too much, I would request him to tell me all

the little circumstances of his life; what schools he attended, when he came to Oxford, when he came to London, &c. &c. He did not disapprove of my curiosity as to these particulars; but said, "They'll come out by degrees, as we talk together."(1)

He censured Ruffhead's Life of Pope(2); and said, "he knew nothing of Pope, and nothing of poetry." He praised Dr. Joseph Warton's Essay on Pope; but said, "he supposed we should have no more of it, as

(1) When, on the 18th of July, 1773, I happened to allude to his future biographer, "And who will be my biographer," said he, "do you think?" "Goldsmith, no doubt," replied I, "and he will do it the best among us."—"The dog would write it best, to be sure," replied he; "but his particular malice towards me, and general disregard for truth, would make the book useless to all, and injurious to my character."—"Oh! as to that," said I, "we should all fasten upon him, and force him to do you justice; but the worst is, the Doctor does not know your life; nor can I tell, indeed, who does, except Dr. Taylor of Ashbourne."—"Why, Taylor," said he, "is better acquainted with my *heart* than any man or woman now alive; and the history of my Oxford exploits lies all between him and Adams; but Dr. James knows my very early days better than he. After my coming to London to drive the world about a little, you must all go to Jack Hawkesworth for anecdotes. I lived in great familiarity with him (though I think there was not much affection) from the year 1753 till the time Mr. Thrale and *you* took me up. I intend, however, to disappoint the rogues, and either make you write the Life, with Taylor's intelligence; or, which is better, do it myself, after outliving you all. I am now," added he, "keeping a diary, in hopes of using it for that purpose some time."—PIOZZI.

This (as well as the story of the *shoes, ante*, Vol. I. p. 79.) seems inconsistent with the inference drawn from the books of Pembroke College, that Johnson had left Oxford before Taylor came thither. I can attempt to reconcile these discrepancies only by supposing that Johnson, though he had left *Pembroke College*, continued in Oxford, living, perhaps, with Taylor, as companion or private tutor. — C.

(2) [Owen Ruffhead was born in 1723, and died in 1769; in which year his "Life of Pope" was published. The materials were supplied by Dr. Warburton, who corrected the proof sheets.]

the author had not been able to persuade the world to think of Pope as he did." BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, should that prevent him from continuing his work? He is an ingenious counsel, who has made the most of his cause: he is not obliged to gain it." JOHNSON. "But, Sir, there is a difference, when the cause is of a man's own making."

We talked of the proper use of riches. JOHNSON. "If I were a man of a great estate, I would drive all the rascals whom I did not like out of the county, at an election."

I asked him, how far he thought wealth should be employed in hospitality. JOHNSON. "You are to consider that ancient hospitality, of which we hear so much, was in an uncommercial country, when men being idle, were glad to be entertained at rich men's tables. But in a commercial country, a busy country, time becomes precious, and therefore hospitality is not so much valued. No doubt there is still room for a certain degree of it; and a man has a satisfaction in seeing his friends eating and drinking around him. But promiscuous hospitality is not the way to gain real influence. You must help some people at table before others; you must ask some people how they like their wine oftener than others. You therefore offend more people than you please. You are like the French statesman (1), who said, when he granted a favour, '*J'ai fait dix mécontents et un ingrat.*' Besides, Sir, being entertained ever so well at a man's table, impresses no lasting regard or esteem

(1) [This "French statesman" was Louis XIV.]

No, Sir, the way to make sure of power and influence is, by lending money confidentially to your neighbours at a small interest, or perhaps at no interest at all, and having their bonds in your possession." BOSWELL. "May not a man, Sir, employ his riches to advantage, in educating young men of merit?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if they fall in your way; but if it be understood that you patronise young men of merit, you will be harassed with solicitations. You will have numbers forced upon you, who have no merit; some will force them upon you from mistaken partiality; and some from downright interested motives, without scruple; and you will be disgraced."

"Were I a rich man, I would propagate all kinds of trees that will grow in the open air. A green-house is childish. I would introduce foreign animals into the country; for instance, the rein-deer." (1)

The conversation now turned on critical subjects. JOHNSON. "Bayes, in 'The Rehearsal,' is a mighty silly character. If it was intended to be like a particular man, it could only be diverting while that man was remembered. But I question whether it was meant for Dryden, as has been reported; for we know some of the passages said to be ridiculed, were written since the Rehearsal: at least a passage mentioned in the Preface is of a later date."(2) I main-

(1) This project has since been realised. Sir Henry Liddel, who made a spirited tour into Lapland, brought two rein-deer to his estate in Northumberland, where they bred; but the race has unfortunately perished.

(2) Dr. Johnson did not know, it appears, that several *additions* were made to the "The Rehearsal," after the first edition. The ridicule on the passages here alluded to is found among

tained that it had merit as a general satire on the self-importance of dramatic authors. But even in this light he held it very cheap.

We then walked to the Pantheon. The first view of it did not strike us so much as Ranelagh (1), of which he said, the "*coup d'œil* was the finest thing he had ever seen." The truth is, Ranelagh is of a more beautiful form; more of it, or rather indeed the whole *rotunda*, appears at once, and it is better lighted. However, as Johnson observed, we saw the Pantheon in time of mourning, when there was a dull uniformity; whereas we had seen Ranelagh, when the view was enlivened with a gay profusion of co-

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those *additions*.—M. —Bayes may have been originally sketched for Sir Robert Howard, but there is no doubt that the finished picture was meant for Dryden—*he himself complains bitterly that it was so*, and Johnson, better informed when he came to write Dryden's Life, expressly says, that "he was characterised under the name of Bayes in 'The Rehearsal.'"—C.

(1) Ranelagh, so called because its site was that of a villa of Viscount Ranelagh, near Chelsea, was a place of entertainment, of which the principal room was an oval of great dimensions, with an orchestra in the centre, and tiers of boxes all round. The chief amusement was *promenading*, as it was called, round and round the circular area below, and taking refreshments in the boxes, while the orchestra executed different pieces of music. The Pantheon, in Oxford Street, was built in 1772, after Wyatt's designs, as a kind of *town Ranelagh*, but partook more of the shape of a theatre (to the purposes of which it was sometimes applied). Both these places had a considerable vogue for a time, but are now almost forgotten: the last appearance (if one may use the expression) of Ranelagh was when the installation ball of the Knights of the Bath, in 1802, was given there. It has since been razed to the ground, and no vestige of that once fairy palace remains. The original Pantheon was burned down, but was rebuilt on a more moderate scale, and used to be heard of, as the scene of an occasional masquerade or concert; but it has not been opened, it is believed, for the last twenty years.—C. [In 1834, the building was converted into a bazaar.]

lours. Mrs. Bosville (1), of Gunthwait, in Yorkshire, joined us, and entered into conversation with us. Johnson said to me afterwards, "Sir, this is a mighty intelligent lady."

I said there was not half a guinea's worth of pleasure in seeing this place. JOHNSON. "But, Sir, there is half a guinea's worth of inferiority to other people in not having seen it." BOSWELL. "I doubt, Sir, whether there are many happy people here." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, there are many happy people here. There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them."

Happening to meet Sir Adam Ferguson (2), I presented him to Dr. Johnson. Sir Adam expressed some apprehension that the Pantheon would encourage luxury. "Sir," said Johnson, "I am a great friend to public amusements; for they keep people from vice. You now," addressing himself to me, "would have been with a wench, had you not been here. Oh! I forgot you were married."

Sir Adam suggested, that luxury corrupts a people, and destroys the spirit of liberty. JOHNSON. "Sir, that is all visionary. I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual. Sir, the danger of the abuse of power

(1) Diana Wentworth, wife of Godfrey Bosville, Esq. of Gunthwait, whose daughter had married, in 1768, Sir Alexander (afterwards created Lord) Macdonald. — C.

(2) Sir Adam Ferguson of Kelkerran, Bart. member of parliament for Ayrshire from 1774 to 1780. — C.

is nothing to a private man. What Frenchman is prevented from passing his life as he pleases?" (1) SIR ADAM. "But, Sir, in the British constitution it is surely of importance to keep up a spirit in the people, so as to preserve a balance against the crown." JOHNSON. "Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig. (2) Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the crown? The crown has not power enough. When I say that all governments are alike, I consider that in no government power can be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree, they will rise and cut off his head. There is a remedy in human nature against tyranny, that will keep us safe under every form of government. Had not the people of France thought themselves honoured in sharing in the brilliant actions of Louis XIV., they would not have endured him; and we may say the same of the King of Prussia's people." Sir Adam introduced the ancient Greeks and Romans. JOHNSON. "Sir, the mass of both of them were barbarians. The mass of every people must be barbarous where there is no printing, and consequently knowledge is not generally diffused.

(1) This is sad "laxity of talk." If a Frenchman had written any thing like Johnson's "Norfolk Prophecy," or talked of Louis XV. as Johnson did of George the Second, he would have been either forced to fly, or would have expiated his indiscretion in the Bastille: poor Marmontel was, we know, sent to the Bastille for repeating the parody of a few lines in a play, at which a lord of the bedchamber happened to be offended.— C.

(2) These words must have been accompanied and softened by some jocular expression of countenance or intonation of voice; for, rude as Johnson often was, it is hardly conceivable that he should have seriously said such a thing to a gentleman whom he saw for the first time. — C.

Knowledge is diffused among our people by the newspapers." Sir Adam mentioned the orators, poets, and artists of Greece. JOHNSON. "Sir, I am talking of the mass of the people. We see even what the boasted Athenians were. The little effect which Demosthenes's orations had upon them shows that they were barbarians."

Sir Adam was unlucky in his topics; for he suggested a doubt of the propriety of bishops having seats in the House of Lords. JOHNSON. "How so, Sir? Who is more proper for having the dignity of a peer, than a bishop, provided a bishop be what he ought to be; and if improper bishops be made, that is not the fault of the bishops, but of those who make them."

On Sunday, April 5., after attending divine service at St. Paul's church, I found him alone. Of a schoolmaster (1) of his acquaintance, a native of Scotland, he said, "He has a great deal of good about him; but he is also very defective in some respects. His inner part is good, but his outer part is mighty aukward. You in Scotland do not attain that nice critical skill in languages, which we get in our schools in England. I would not put a boy to him, whom I intended for a man of learning. But for the sons of citizens, who are to learn a little, get good morals, and then go to trade, he may do very well."

I mentioned a cause in which I had appeared as counsel at the bar of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where a *Probationer* (as one

(1) Mr. Elphinston: see *ante*, Vol. I. p. 245. — C.

licensed to preach, but not yet ordained, is called) was opposed in his application to be inducted, because it was alleged that he had been guilty of fornication five years before. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if he has repented, it is not a sufficient objection. A man who is good enough to go to heaven, is good enough to be a clergyman." This was a humane and liberal sentiment. But the character of a clergyman is more sacred than that of an ordinary Christian. As he is to instruct with authority, he should be regarded with reverence, as one upon whom divine truth has had the effect to set him above such transgressions, as men, less exalted by spiritual habits, and yet upon the whole not to be excluded from heaven, have been betrayed into by the predominance of passion. That clergymen may be considered as sinners in general, as all men are, cannot be denied; but this reflection will not counteract their good precepts so much, as the absolute knowledge of their having been guilty of certain specific immoral acts. I told him, that by the rules of the Church of Scotland, in their "Book of Discipline," if a *scandal*, as it is called, is not prosecuted for five years, it cannot afterwards be proceeded upon, "unless it be *of a heinous nature*, or again become flagrant;" and that hence a question arose, whether fornication was a sin of a heinous nature; and that I had maintained, that it did not deserve that epithet, in as much as it was not one of those sins which argue very great depravity of heart: in short, was not, in the general acceptation of mankind, a heinous sin. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, it is not a heinous sin. A heinous sin

is that for which a man is punished with death or banishment." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, after I had argued that it was not a heinous sin, an old clergyman rose up, and repeating the text of scripture denouncing judgment against whoremongers, asked, whether, considering this, there could be any doubt of fornication being a heinous sin. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, observe the word *whoremonger*. Every sin, if persisted in, will become heinous. Whoremonger is a dealer in whores, as ironmonger is a dealer in iron. But as you don't call a man an ironmonger for buying and selling a penknife; so you don't call a man a whoremonger for getting one wench with child." (1)

I spoke of the inequality of the livings of the clergy in England, and the scanty provisions of some of the curates. JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; but it cannot be helped. You must consider, that the revenues of the clergy are not at the disposal of the state, like the pay of an army. Different men have founded different churches; and some are better endowed, some worse. The state cannot interfere and make an equal division of what has been particularly appropriated. Now when a clergyman has but a small living, or even two small livings, he can afford very little to the curate."

He said, he went more frequently to church when there were prayers only, than when there was also

(1) It must not be presumed that Dr. Johnson meant to give any countenance to licentiousness, though in the character of an advocate he made a just and subtle distinction between occasional and habitual transgression.

a sermon, as the people required more an example for the one than the other; it being much easier for them to hear a sermon, than to fix their minds on prayer.

On Monday, April 6., I dined with him at Sir Alexander Macdonald's, where was a young officer in the regimentals of the Scots Royal, who talked with a vivacity, fluency, and precision so uncommon, that he attracted particular attention. He proved to be the Honourable Thomas Erskine, youngest brother to the Earl of Buchan, who has since risen into such brilliant reputation at the bar in Westminster Hall.(1)

Fielding being mentioned, Johnson exclaimed, "He was a blockhead;" and upon my expressing my astonishment at so strange an assertion, he said, "What I mean by his being a blockhead is, that he was a barren rascal." BOSWELL. "Will you not allow, Sir, that he draws very natural pictures of human life?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is of very low life. Richardson used to say, that had he not known who Fielding was, he should have believed

(1) Born in 1748; entered the navy as a midshipman in 1764, and the army as an ensign in the Royals in 1768. He was called to the bar in 1779; appointed a King's counsel in 1783; and, in 1806, Lord Chancellor of England, and created a baron by the title of Lord Erskine. He died in 1823. Neither his conversation (though, even to the last, remarkable for fluency and vivacity), nor his parliamentary speeches, ever bore any proportion to the extraordinary force and brilliancy of his forensic eloquence. Those who only knew him in private, or in the House of Commons, had some difficulty in believing the effect he produced at the bar. During the last years of his life, his conduct was eccentric to a degree that justified a suspicion, and even a hope, that his understanding was impaired. — C.

he was an ostler. Sir, there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all 'Tom Jones.' (1) I, indeed, never read 'Joseph Andrews.'" ERSKINE. "Surely, Sir, Richardson is very tedious." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment." I have already given my opinion of Fielding; but I cannot refrain from repeating here my wonder at Johnson's excessive and unaccountable depreciation of one of the best writers that England has produced. "Tom Jones" has stood the test of public opinion with such success, as to have established its great merit, both for the story, the sentiments, and the manners, and also the va-

(1) Johnson's severity against Fielding did not arise from any viciousness in his style, but from his loose life, and the profligacy of almost all his male characters. Who would venture to read one of his novels aloud to modest women? His novels are *male* amusements, and very amusing they certainly are. — Fielding's conversation was coarse, and so tinctured with the rank weeds of *the Garden* [Covent Garden], that it would *now* be thought only fit for a brothel. — BURNEY.

The vices and follies of Tom Jones are those which the world soon teaches to all who enter on the career of life, and to which society is unhappily but too indulgent; nor do we believe, that, in any one instance, the perusal of Fielding's novel has added one libertine to the large list, who would not have been such had it never crossed the press. And it is with concern we add our sincere belief, that the fine picture of frankness and generosity, exhibited in that fictitious character, has had as few imitators as the career of his follies. Let it not be supposed that we are indifferent to morality, because we treat with scorn that affectation, which, while in common life it connives at the open practice of libertinism, pretends to detest the memory of an author, who painted life as it was, with all its shades, and more than all its lights, which it occasionally exhibits, to relieve them. — SIR WALTER SCOTT, Lives of Novelists.

rieties of diction, so as to leave no doubt of its having an animated truth of execution throughout.

A book of travels, lately published under the title of *Coriat Junior*, and written by Mr. Paterson (1), was mentioned. Johnson said, this book was in imitation of Sterne (2), and not of Coriat, whose name Paterson had chosen as a whimsical one. "Tom Coriat," said he, "was a humourist about the court of James the First. He had a mixture of learning, of wit, and of buffoonery. He first travelled through Europe, and published his travels. (3) He afterwards travelled on foot through Asia, and had made many remarks; but he died at Mandoa, and his remarks were lost."

We talked of gaming, and animadverted on it with severity. JOHNSON. "Nay, gentlemen, let us not aggravate the matter. It is not roguery to play

(1) Mr. Samuel Paterson, eminent for his knowledge of books. — B. — He was the son of a woollen draper: he kept a bookseller's shop, chiefly for old books, and was afterwards an auctioneer; but seems to have been unsuccessful in all his attempts at business. He made catalogues of several celebrated libraries. He died in 1802, ætat. 77. — C.

(2) Mr. Paterson, in a pamphlet, produced some evidence to show that his work was written before Sterne's "Sentimental Journey" appeared.

(3) Under the title of "*Crudities*, hastily gobbled up in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia, Helvetia, &c." Coriat was born in 1577, educated at Westminster school and Oxford, and died in 1617, at *Surat*. — C. — [The following account of his death is given by Mr. Edward Terry, in his "Voyage to East India, 1655." — "Hearing, on a certain occasion, that King James I. spoke slightingly of him, and fearing at the same time that he should not reach home to give an account of his second wanderings, he actually sunk down in a swoon; and being, not long after, at Surat, and indulging too freely, for an abstemious man, in drinking sack, it increased a flux under which he laboured, and death at length overtook this traveller in December, 1617."]

with a man who is ignorant of the game, while you are master of it, and so win his money; for he thinks he can play better than you, as you think you can play better than he; and the superior skill carries it." ERSKINE. "He is a fool, but you are not a rogue." JOHNSON. "That's much about the truth, Sir. It must be considered, that a man who only does what every one of the society to which he belongs would do, is not a dishonest man. In the republic of Sparta it was agreed, that stealing was not dishonourable if not discovered. I do not commend a society where there is an agreement that what would not otherwise be fair, shall be fair: but I maintain, that an individual of any society, who practises what is allowed, is not a dishonest man." BOSWELL. "So then, Sir, you do not think ill of a man who wins perhaps forty thousand pounds in a winter?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not call a gamester a dishonest man; but I call him an unsocial man, an unprofitable man. Gaming is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good. Trade gives employment to numbers, and so produces intermediate good."

Mr. Erskine told us that, when he was in the island of Minorca, he not only read prayers, but preached two sermons to the regiment.(1) He

(1) Lord Erskine was fond of this anecdote. He told it to me the first time that I had the honour of being in his company, and often repeated it, with a boast that he had been a sailor and a soldier, and a lawyer and a parson. The latter he affected to think the *greatest* of his efforts, and to support that opinion would quote the prayer for the *clergy* in the liturgy, from the expression of which he would (in no commendable spirit of jocularity) infer, that the enlightening *them* was one of the "*greatest marvels*" which could be worked. — C.

seemed to object to the passage in scripture, where we are told that the angel of the Lord smote in one night forty thousand Assyrians. (1) "Sir," said Johnson, "you should recollect that there was a supernatural interposition; they were destroyed by pestilence. You are not to suppose that the angel of the Lord went about and stabbed each of them with a dagger, or knocked them on the head, man by man."

After Mr. Erskine was gone, a discussion took place, whether the present Earl of Buchan, when Lord Cardross, did right to refuse to go secretary of the embassy to Spain, when Sir James Gray, a man of inferior rank, went ambassador. Dr. Johnson said that, perhaps in point of interest he did wrong; but in point of dignity he did well. Sir Alexander insisted that he was wrong; and said that Mr. Pitt intended it as an advantageous thing for him. "Why, Sir," said Johnson, "Mr. Pitt might think it an advantageous thing for him to make him a vintner, and get him all the Portugal trade: but he would have demeaned himself strangely, had he accepted of such a situation. Sir, had he gone secretary while his inferior was ambassador, he would have been a traitor to his rank and family." (2)

(1) One hundred and eighty-five thousand. See Isaiah, xxxvii. 36., and 2 Kings, xix. 35. — M.

(2) If this principle were to be admitted, the young nobility would be excluded from all the professions; for the superiors in the profession would frequently be their inferiors in personal rank. Would Johnson have dissuaded Lord Cardross from entering on the military profession, because at his outset he must have been commanded by a person inferior in personal rank

I talked of the little attachment which subsisted between near relations in London. "Sir," said Johnson, "in a country so commercial as ours, where every man can do for himself, there is not so much occasion for that attachment. No man is thought the worse of here, whose brother was hanged. In uncommercial countries, many of the branches of a family must depend on the stock; so, in order to make the head of the family take care of them, they are represented as connected with his reputation, that, self-love being interested, he may exert himself to promote their interest. You have, first, large circles, or clans; as commerce increases, the connection is confined to families; by degrees, that too goes off, as having become unnecessary, and there being few opportunities of intercourse. One brother is merchant in the city, and another is an officer in the guards: how little intercourse can these two have!"

I argued warmly for the old feudal system. Sir Alexander opposed it, and talked of the pleasure of seeing all men free and independent. JOHNSON. "I agree with Mr. Boswell, that there must be high satisfaction in being a feudal lord; but we are to consider, that we ought not to wish to have a number of men unhappy for the satisfaction of one."— I maintained that numbers, namely, the vassals or followers, were not unhappy; for that there was a

This, if ever it was a subject of real doubt, is now better understood; and young men of the highest rank think it no degradation to enter into the junior ranks of the military, naval, and diplomatic and official professions. — C.

reciprocal satisfaction between the lord and them, he being kind in his authority over them, they being respectful and faithful to him.

On Thursday, April 9., I called on him to beg he would go and dine with me at the Mitre tavern. He had resolved not to dine at all this day, I know not for what reason; and I was so unwilling to be deprived of his company, that I was content to submit to suffer a want, which was at first somewhat painful; but he soon made me forget it: and a man is always pleased with himself, when he finds his intellectual inclinations predominate.

He observed, that to reason philosophically on the nature of prayer, was very unprofitable.

Talking of ghosts, he said, he knew one friend, who was an honest man and a sensible man, who told him he had seen a ghost; old Mr. Edward Cave, the printer at St. John's Gate. He said, Mr. Cave did not like to talk of it, and seemed to be in great horror whenever it was mentioned. BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, what did he say was the appearance?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, something of a shadowy being."

I mentioned witches, and asked him what they properly meant. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, they properly mean those who make use of the aid of evil spirits." BOSWELL. "There is no doubt, Sir, a general report and belief of their having existed." JOHNSON. "You have not only the general report and belief, but you have many voluntary solemn confessions." He did not affirm any thing positively

upon a subject which it is the fashion of the times to laugh at as a matter of absurd credulity. He only seemed willing, as a candid inquirer after truth, however strange and inexplicable, to show that he understood what might be urged for it.(1)

(1) See this curious question treated by him with most acute ability, *post*, Aug. 16. 1773.


James Oglethorpe

CHAPTER VIII.

1772—1773.

Dinner at General Oglethorpe's.—Armorial Bearings.—Duelling.—Prince Eugene.—Siege of Belgrade.—Friendships.—Goldsmith's Natural History.—Story of Prendergast.—Expulsion of Methodists from Oxford.—"In Vino Veritas."—Education of the People.—Sense of Touch in the Blind.—Theory of Sounds.—Taste in the Arts.—Francis Osborne's Works.—Country Gentlemen.—Long Stories.—Beattie and Robertson.—Advice to Authors.—Climate.—Walpole and Pitt.—Vicious Intromission.—Beattie's Essay.—Visit to Lichfield and Ashbourne.

On Friday, April 10., I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where we found Dr. Goldsmith.

Armorial bearings having been mentioned, Johnson said they were as ancient as the siege of Thebes, which he proved by a passage in one of the tragedies of Euripides. (1)

(1) The passage to which Johnson alluded is to be found (as I conjecture) in the "Phœnissæ," l. 1120.

> Καὶ πρῶτα μὲν προσῆγε, κ. τ. λ.
> Ὁ τῆς κυναγοῦ Παρθενοπαῖος ἔκγονος,
> ΕΠΙΣΗΜ' ἔχων ΟΙΚΕΙΟΝ ἐν μέσῳ σάκει. — J. Boswell, Jun.

The meaning is that "Parthenopæus had, in the centre of his shield, the *domestic sign*—*Atalanta killing the Ætolian boar*: but this, admitting that the story of Atalanta was the "armorial bearing" of Parthenopæus, would only prove them to be as

I started the question, whether duelling was consistent with moral duty. The brave old general fired at this, and said, with a lofty air, "Undoubtedly a man has a right to defend his honour." GOLDSMITH (turning to me). "I ask you first, Sir, what would you do if you were affronted?" I answered, I should think it necessary to fight. "Why then," replied Goldsmith, "that solves the question." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, it does not solve the question. It does not follow, that what a man would do is therefore right." I said, I wished to have it settled, whether duelling was contrary to the laws of Christianity. Johnson immediately entered on the subject, and treated it in a masterly manner; and, so far as I have been able to recollect, his thoughts were these:—"Sir, as men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise; which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at this artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour—

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ancient as *Euripides*, who flourished (442 A. C.) near 800 years after the siege of Thebes (1225 A. C.). Homer, whom the chronologists place 500 years before Euripides, describes a sculptured shield; and there can be little doubt that very soon after ingenuity had made a shield, taste would begin to decorate it. The words "*domestic sign*" are certainly very curious, yet probably mean no more than that he bore on his shield the representation of a family story. The better opinion seems to be, that it was not till the visor concealed the face of the warrior, that the ornaments of the shields and crests became distinctive of individuals and families in that *peculiar* manner which we understand by the terms "*armorial bearings*."—C.

he lies, his neighbour tells him — he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow: but in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must, therefore, be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, Sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self-defence. He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self-defence; to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish there was not that superfluity of refinement; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel."

"Let it be remembered, that this justification is applicable only to the person who *receives* an affront. All mankind must condemn the aggressor." (1)

The General told us, that, when he was a very young man, I think only fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene of Savoy, he was sitting in a company at table with a prince of Wirtemberg. The prince took up a glass of wine, and, by a fillip, made some of it fly in Oglethorpe's face. Here was a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly, might have fixed a quarrelsome character upon the young soldier: to have taken no notice of it, might have

(1) The frequent disquisitions on this subject bring painfully to recollection the death of Mr. Boswell's eldest son, Sir Alexander, who was killed in a duel, at Auchterpool, arising from a political dispute, on the 26th of March, 1822, by Mr. Stuart, of Dunearn. — C. [This conversation on duelling was quoted by Mr. Jeffrey, the counsel for Mr. Stuart.]

been considered as cowardice. Oglethorpe, therefore, keeping his eye upon the prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what his highness had done in jest, said "*Mon Prince,*—" (I forget the French words he used; the purport however was), "that's a good joke; but we do it much better in England;" and threw a whole glass of wine in the prince's face. An old general, who sat by, said, "*Il a bien fait, mon prince, vous l'avez commencé:*" and thus all ended in good humour."

Dr. Johnson said, "Pray, general, give us an account of the siege of Belgrade." Upon which the general, pouring a little wine upon the table, described every thing with a wet finger: "Here we were; here were the Turks," &c. &c. Johnson listened with the closest attention.

A question was started, how far people who disagree in a capital point can live in friendship together. Johnson said they might. Goldsmith said they could not, as they had not the *idem velle atque idem nolle*—the same likings and the same aversions. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke: I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party." (1) GOLDSMITH. "But, Sir, when people live together who have something as to which they disagree, and which they want to shun, they will be in the situation mentioned in the story of Bluebeard: 'You may

(1) Of which Mr. Burke was a leading member.—C.

look into all the chambers but one.' But we should have the greatest inclination to look into that chamber, to talk of that subject." JOHNSON (with a loud voice). "Sir, I am not saying that *you* could live in friendship with a man from whom you differ as to some point; I am only saying that *I* could do it. You put me in mind of Sappho in Ovid." (1)

Goldsmith told us, that he was now busy in writing a Natural History (2); and, that he might have

(1) Mr. Boswell's note here being rather short, as taken at the time (with a view, perhaps, to future revision), Johnson's remark is obscure, and requires to be a little opened. What he said, probably was, "You seem to think that two friends, to live well together, must be in a perfect harmony with each other; that each should be to the other, what Sappho boasts she was to her lover, and uniformly agree in every particular: but this is by no means necessary," &c. The words of Sappho alluded to, are, "*omnique à parte placebam.*" Ovid. Epist. Sapp. ad Phaonem. l. 45. — M.

I should rather conjecture that the passage which Johnson had in view was the following, l. 45.: —

"Si, nisi quæ facie poterit te digna videri,
Nulla futura tua est; nulla futura tua est."

His reasoning and its illustration I take to be this: — If you are determined to associate with no one whose sentiments do not universally coincide with your own, you will by such a resolution exclude yourself from all society; for no two men can be found who, on all points, invariably think alike. So Sappho in Ovid tells Phaon, that if he will not unite himself to any one who is not a complete resemblance of himself, it will be impossible for him to form any union at all. The lines which I have quoted are thus expanded in Pope's Paraphrase; which, to say the truth, I suspect was at this moment more in Johnson's recollection than the original: —

"If to no charms thou wilt thy heart resign
But such as merit, such as equal thine,
By none, alas! by none, thou canst be moved,
Phaon alone by Phaon must be loved." — J. BOSWELL, Jun.

(2) Published, in 1774, in eight volumes, 8vo, under the title of a "History of the Earth and of Animated Nature." — C.

full leisure for it, he had taken lodgings at a farmer's house, near to the six mile-stone, on the Edgeware-road, and had carried down his books in two returned post-chaises. He said, he believed the farmer's family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children: he was *The Gentleman.* Mr. Mickle (1), the translator of "The Lusiad," and I, went to visit him at this place a few days afterwards. He was not at home; but, having a curiosity to see his apartment, we went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals, scrawled upon the wall with a black-lead pencil.

The subject of ghosts being introduced, Johnson repeated what he had told me of a friend of his (2), an honest man, and a man of sense, having asserted to him that he had seen an apparition. Goldsmith told us, he was assured by his brother, the Reverend Mr. Goldsmith, that he also had seen one. General Oglethorpe told us, that Prendergast, an officer in the Duke of Marlborough's army, had mentioned to many of his friends, that he should die on a particular day; that upon that day a battle took place with the French; that after it was over

(1) William Julius Mickle, the son of a Scotch clergyman, was born at Langholm, Dumfriesshire, in 1734. He lived the life that poets lived in those days; that is, in difficulties and distress, till 1779, when, being appointed secretary to Commodore Johnson, he realised by prize agencies a moderate competence. He retired to Forest Hill, near Oxford, where he died in 1788. His translation of the Lusiad is still read: his original pieces are almost all forgotten. — C.

(2) Mr. Cave. See *antè*, p. 213.

and Prendergast was still alive, his brother officers, while they were yet in the field, jestingly asked him, where was his prophecy now? Prendergast gravely answered, "I shall die, notwithstanding what you see." Soon afterwards, there came a shot from a French battery, to which the orders for a cessation of arms had not yet reached, and he was killed upon the spot. Colonel Cecil, who took possession of his effects, found in his pocket-book the following solemn entry: —

[Here the date.] "Dreamt — or ——— (1) Sir John Friend meets me:" (here the very day on which he was killed was mentioned.)

Prendergast had been connected with Sir John Friend, who was executed for high treason. General Oglethorpe said, he was with Colonel Cecil, when Pope came and inquired into the truth of this story, which made a great noise at the time, and was then confirmed by the colonel.

(1) Here was a blank, which may be filled up thus: — "*was told by an apparition;*" — the writer being probably uncertain whether he was asleep or awake, when his mind was impressed with the solemn presentiment with which the fact afterwards happened so wonderfully to correspond. — B.

My friend, Sir Henry Hardinge, Secretary at War, is so kind as to inform me, that it appears that Colonel Sir Thomas Prendergast, of the twenty-second foot, was killed at Malplaquet, August 31. 1709; but no trace can be found of any *Colonel* Cecil in the army at that period. The well-known Jacobite, Colonel William Cecil, who was sent to the Tower in 1744, could hardly have been, in 1709, of the age, rank, and station which Oglethorpe's anecdote seems to imply. Is it not very strange, if this story made so great a noise, we should read of it no where else? and, as so much curiosity was excited, that the *paper* should not have been preserved, or, a least, so generally shown as to be mentioned by some other witness? — C.

On Saturday, April 11., he appointed me to come to him in the evening, when he should be at leisure to give me some assistance for the defence of Hastie, the schoolmaster of Campbelltown, for whom I was to appear in the house of lords. When I came, I found him unwilling to exert himself. I pressed him to write down his thoughts upon the subject. He said, "There's no occasion for my writing: I'll talk to you." He was, however, at last prevailed on to dictate to me, while I wrote as follows:— [See APPENDIX, No. 1.]

"This, Sir," said he, "you are to turn in your mind, and make the best use of it you can in your speech."

Of our friend Goldsmith he said, "Sir, he is so much afraid of being unnoticed, that he often talks merely lest you should forget that he is in the company." BOSWELL. "Yes, he stands forward." JOHNSON. "True, Sir; but if a man is to stand forward, he should wish to do it, not in an awkward posture, not in rags, not so as that he shall only be exposed to ridicule." BOSWELL. "For my part, I like very well to hear honest Goldsmith talk away carelessly." JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir; but he should not like to hear himself."

On Tuesday, April 14., the decree of the court of sessions in the Schoolmaster's cause was reversed in the House of Lords, after a very eloquent speech by Lord Mansfield, who showed himself an adept in school discipline, but I thought was too rigorous towards my client. On the evening of the next day

I supped with Dr. Johnson, at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, in company with Mr. Langton and his brother-in-law, Lord Binning. (1) I repeated a sentence of Lord Mansfield's speech, of which, by the aid of Mr. Longlands, the solicitor on the other side, who obligingly allowed me to compare his note with my own, I have a full copy: — "My Lords, severity is not the way to govern either boys or men." "Nay," said Johnson, "it is the way to *govern* them. I know not whether it be the way to *mend* them."

I talked of the recent (2) expulsion of six students from the University of Oxford, who were methodists, and would not desist from publicly praying and exhorting. JOHNSON. "Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper. What have they to do at an university, who are not willing to be taught, but will presume to teach? Where is religion to be learnt but at an university? Sir, they were examined, and found to be mighty ignorant fellows." BOSWELL. "But, was it not hard, Sir, to expel them; for I am told they were good beings?" JOHNSON. "I believe they might be good beings; but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we

(1) Charles, Lord Binning, afterwards eighth Earl of Haddington, was the son of Mary Holt, who, by a first marriage with Mr. Lloyd, was the mother of Lady Rothes, Mr. Langton's wife. — C.

(2) Not very recent, if he alluded to six members of St. Edmund Hall, who were expelled May, 1768. See Gent. Mag. vol. xxxviii. p. 225. — C.

turn her out of a garden." Lord Elibank used to repeat this as an illustration uncommonly happy.

Desirous of calling Johnson forth to talk, and exercise his wit, though I should myself be the object of it, I resolutely ventured to undertake the defence of convivial indulgence in wine, though he was not to-night in the most genial humour. After urging the common plausible topics, I at last had recourse to the maxim, *in vino veritas*, a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, Sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him."(1)

Mr. Langton told us he was about to establish a school upon his estate; but it had been suggested to him, that it might have a tendency to make the people less industrious. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; while learning to read and write is a distinction, the few who have that distinction may be the less inclined to work; but when every body learns to read and write, it is no longer a distinction. A man who has a laced waistcoat is too fine a man to work; but if every body had laced waistcoats, we should have people working in laced waistcoats. There are no

(1) Mrs. Piozzi, in her "Anecdotes," p. 261., has given an erroneous account of this incident, as of many others. She pretends to relate it from recollection, as if she herself had been present; when the fact is, that it was communicated to her by me. She has represented it as a personality, and the tr point has escaped her.

people whatever more industrious, none who work more, than our manufacturers; yet they have all learnt to read and write. Sir, you must not neglect doing a thing immediately good, from fear of remote evil; from fear of its being abused. A man who has candles may sit up too late, which he would not do if he had not candles; but nobody will deny that the art of making candles, by which light is continued to us beyond the time that the sun gives us light, is a valuable art, and ought to be preserved." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, would it not be better to follow nature, and go to bed and rise just as nature gives us light or withholds it?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; for then we should have no kind of equality in the partition of our time between sleeping and waking. It would be very different in different seasons and in different places. In some of the northern parts of Scotland how little light is there in the depth of winter!"

We talked of Tacitus, and I hazarded an opinion that, with all his merit for penetration, shrewdness of judgment, and terseness of expression, he was too compact, too much broken into hints, as it were, and, therefore, too difficult to be understood. To my great satisfaction, Dr. Johnson sanctioned this opinion. "Tacitus, Sir, seems to me rather to have made notes for an historical work, than to have written a history."(1)

(1) It is remarkable that Lord Monboddo, whom, on account of his resembling Dr. Johnson in some particulars, Foote called an Elzevir edition of him, has, by coincidence, made the very same remark. — "Origin and Progress of Language," vol. iii. 2d edit. p. 219. [See *post*, Aug. 21. 1773.]

At this time, it appears, from his "Prayers and Meditations," that he had been more than commonly diligent in religious duties, particularly in reading the holy scriptures. It was Passion Week, that solemn season which the Christian world has appropriated to the commemoration of the mysteries of our redemption, and during which, whatever embers of religion are in our breasts, will be kindled into pious warmth.

I paid him short visits both on Friday and Saturday; and, seeing his large folio Greek Testament before him, beheld him with a reverential awe, and would not intrude upon his time. While he was thus employed to such good purpose, and while his friends in their intercourse with him constantly found a vigorous intellect and a lively imagination, it is melancholy to read in his private register, "My mind is unsettled and my memory confused. I have of late turned my thoughts with a very useless earnestness upon past incidents. I have yet got no command over my thoughts: an unpleasing incident is almost certain to hinder my rest." [p. 111.] What philosophic heroism was it in him to appear with such manly fortitude to the world, while he was inwardly so distressed! We may surely believe that the mysterious principle of being "made perfect through suffering," was to be strongly exemplified in him.

On Sunday, April 19., being Easter-day, General Paoli and I paid him a visit before dinner. We talked of the notion that blind persons can distinguish colours by the touch. Johnson said, that Professor

Saunderson[1] mentions his having attempted to do it, but that he found he was aiming at an impossibility; that, to be sure, a difference in the surface makes the difference of colours; but that difference is so fine, that it is not sensible to the touch. The General mentioned jugglers and fraudulent gamesters, who could know cards by the touch. Dr. Johnson said, "The cards used by such persons must be less polished than ours commonly are."

We talked of sounds. The General said, there was no beauty in a simple sound, but only in an harmonious composition of sounds. I presumed to differ from this opinion, and mentioned the soft and sweet sound of a fine woman's voice. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, if a serpent or a toad uttered it, you would think it ugly." BOSWELL. "So you would think, Sir, were a beautiful tune to be uttered by one of those animals." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, it would be admired. We have seen fine fiddlers whom we liked as little as toads" (laughing).

Talking on the subject of taste in the arts, he said, that difference of taste was, in truth, difference of skill. BOSWELL. "But, Sir, is there not a quality called taste, which consists merely in perception or in liking? for instance, we find people differ much as to what is the best style of English composition. Some think Swift's the best; others prefer a fuller and grander way of writing." JOHNSON. "Sir, you must first define what you mean by style, before you

(1) [Nicholas Saunderson, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, died April 19. 1739. He had lost his sight by the small-pox when two years old.]

can judge who has a good taste in style, and who has a bad. The two classes of persons whom you have mentioned, don't suffer as to good and bad. They both agree that Swift has a good neat style; but one loves a neat style, another loves a style of more splendour. In like manner, one loves a plain coat, another loves a laced coat; but neither will deny that each is good in its kind." (1)

While I remained in London this spring, I was with him at several other times, both by himself and in company. I dined with him one day at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, with Lord Elibank, Mr. Langton, and Dr. Vansittart, of Oxford (2) Without specifying each particular day, I have preserved the following memorable things.

(1) The following meditations, made about this period, are very interesting sketches of his feelings: —

"April 26. I was some way hindered from continuing this contemplation in the usual manner, and therefore try, at the distance of a week, to review the last [Easter] Sunday

"I went to church early, having first, I think, used my prayer. When I was there, I had very little perturbation of mind. During the usual time of meditation, I considered the Christian duties under the three principles of soberness, righteousness, and godliness; and purposed to forward godliness by the *annual perusal of the Bible*; righteousness *by settling something for charity*, and soberness *by early hours*. I commended as usual, with preface of permission, and, I think, mentioned Bathurst. I came home, and found Paoli and Boswell waiting for me. What devotions I used after my return home, I do not distinctly remember. I went to prayers in the evening; and, I think, entered late.

"On Good Friday, I paid Peyton without requiring work.

"It is a comfort to me, that, at last, in my sixty-third year, I have attained to know, even thus hastily, confusedly, and imperfectly, what my Bible contains.

"Having missed church in the morning (April 26.), I went this evening, and afterwards sat with Southwell."—(Pr. and Med. pp. 115. 117, 118.)—C.

(2) Robert Vansittart, LL. D., Professor of Civil Law at Oxford. He was a senior fellow of All Souls; where, after he had given up the profession in London, he chiefly resided in a set of rooms, formerly the old library, which he had fitted up in the Gothic style, where he died about 1794. He was the elder brother of Mr. Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal, father of Lord Bexley. — C.

I regretted the reflection, in his preface to Shakspeare, against Garrick, to whom we cannot but apply the following passage: — "I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative." I told him, that Garrick had complained to me of it, and had vindicated himself by assuring me, that Johnson was made welcome to the full use of his collection, and that he left the key of it with a servant, with orders to have a fire and every convenience for him. I found Johnson's notion was, that Garrick wanted to be courted for them, and that, on the contrary, Garrick should have courted him, and sent him the plays of his own accord. But, indeed, considering the slovenly and careless manner in which books were treated by Johnson, it could not be expected that scarce and valuable editions should have been lent to him.

A gentlemen having, to some of the usual arguments for drinking, added this:—"You know, Sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would not you allow a man to drink for that reason?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if he sat next *you*."

I expressed a liking for Mr. Francis Osborne's (1) works, and asked him what he thought of that

(1) Of the family of the Osbornes, of Chicksands, in Bedfordshire. The work by which he is now best known is, his "Historical Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth and King James," written in a very acrimonious spirit. He had attached himself to the Pembroke family; and, like Earl Philip (whom Walpole designates by the too gentle appellation of *memorable simpleton*), joined the Parliamentarians. He died in 1659.—C.

writer. He answered, "A conceited fellow. Were a man to write so now, the boys would throw stones at him." He, however, did not alter my opinion of a favourite author, to whom I was first directed by his being quoted in "The Spectator (1)," and in whom I have found much shrewd and lively sense, expressed, indeed, in a style somewhat quaint; which, however, I do not dislike. His book has an air of originality. We figure to ourselves an ancient gentleman talking to us.

When one of his friends endeavoured to maintain that a country gentleman might contrive to pass his life very agreeably, "Sir," said he, "you cannot give me an instance of any man who is permitted to lay out his own time, contriving not to have tedious hours." This observation, however, is equally applicable to gentlemen who live in cities (2), and are of no profession.

He said, "There is no permanent national character: it varies according to circumstances. Alexander the Great swept India (3); now the Turks sweep Greece."

(1) [No. 150. "Mr. Osborne advises his son to appear, in his habit, rather above than below his fortune; and tells him that he will find a handsome suit of clothes always procures some additional respect."]

(2) Not quite: men who live in cities have theatres, clubs, and all the variety of public and private society within reach.—C.

(3) The force of this illustration is not very obvious. India, so far as regards the natives, is perhaps now quite as liable to be *swept* by an invader as it was three thousand years ago. All authorities seem to be agreed that the people of India and China have changed wonderfully little in the lapse of time.—C. [Dr. Johnson perhaps was only alluding to the fact, that Greece, which formerly sent forth the conquerors of Asia, had sunk to be the province of an Asiatic empire.—J. G. L.]

A learned gentleman, who, in the course of conversation, wished to inform us of this simple fact, that the counsel upon the circuit of Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took, I suppose, seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plenitude of phrase told us, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town-hall; that by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers; that the lodgings of the counsel were near the town-hall; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully however), "It is a pity, Sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth." (1)

He would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield; for he was educated in England. "Much," said he, "may be made of a Scotchman, if he be *caught* young."

Talking of a modern historian and a modern moralist, he said, "There is more thought in the moralist than in the historian. There is but a shallow stream of thought in history." BOSWELL.

(1) Mrs. Piozzi, to whom I told this anecdote, has related it as if the gentleman had given "the *natural history* of the *mouse*." Anecdotes, p. 191. — B. — The "learned gentleman" was certainly Dr. Vansittart, as is proved by two passages in the correspondence between Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson, July and August, 1773. She writes to the Doctor in Scotland, "*I have seen the man that saw the mouse*," &c. Johnson replies, "Poor V———, &c.; he is a good man, and, when his mind is composed, a man of parts." — C.

"But, surely, Sir, an historian has reflection?" JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir; and so has a cat when she catches a mouse for her kitten: but she cannot write like [Beattie]; neither can [Robertson]." (1)

He said, "I am very unwilling to read the manuscripts of authors, and give them my opinion. If the authors who apply to me have money, I bid them boldly print without a name; if they have written in order to get money, I tell them to go to the booksellers and make the best bargain they can." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, if a bookseller should bring you a manuscript to look at?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I would desire the bookseller to take it away."

I mentioned a friend of mine (2) who had resided long in Spain, and was unwilling to return to Britain. JOHNSON. "Sir, he is attached to some woman." BOSWELL. "I rather believe, Sir, it is the fine climate which keeps him there." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, how can you talk so? What is *climate* to happiness? Place me in the heart of Asia; should I not be exiled? What proportion does climate bear to the complex system of human life? You may advise me to go to live at Bologna to eat sausages. The sausages there are the best in the world; they lose much by being carried."

On Saturday, May 9., Mr. Dempster and I had agreed to dine by ourselves at the British Coffee-

(1) The historian and the moralist, whose names Mr. Boswell left in blank, are Doctors Robertson and Beattie. — C.

(2) Probably Mr. Boswell's brother David. See *post*, April 20. 1780. — C.

house. Johnson, on whom I happened to call in the morning, said he would join us; which he did, and we spent a very agreeable day, though I recollect but little of what passed.

He said, "Walpole was a minister given by the King to the people: Pitt was a minister given by the people to the King, — as an adjunct."

"The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich, we may say of Goldsmith, it is a pity he is not knowing. He would not keep his knowledge to himself."

Before leaving London this year, I consulted him upon a question purely of Scotch law. It was held of old, and continued for a long period, to be an established principle in that law, that whoever intermeddled with the effects of a person deceased, without the interposition of legal authority to guard against embezzlement, should be subjected to pay all the debts of the deceased, as having been guilty of what was technically called *vicious intromission.* The court of session had gradually relaxed the strictness of this principle, where the interference proved had been inconsiderable. In a case (1) which came before that court the preceding winter, I had laboured to persuade the judge to return to the ancient law. It was my own sincere opinion, that they ought to adhere to it; but I had exhausted all my powers of reasoning in vain. Johnson thought

(1) Wilson against Smith and Armour.

as I did; and, in order to assist me in my application to the Court for a revision and alteration of the judgment, he dictated to me the following Argument. [See Appendix, No. II.]

With such comprehension of mind, and such clearness of penetration, did he thus treat a subject altogether new to him, without any other preparation than my having stated to him the arguments which had been used on each side of the question. His intellectual powers appeared with peculiar lustre, when tried against those of a writer of such fame as Lord Kames, and that, too, in his Lordship's own department.

This masterly argument, after being prefaced and concluded with some sentences of my own, and garnished with the usual formularies, was actually printed and laid before the lords of session, but without success. My respected friend Lord Hailes, however, one of that honourable body, had critical sagacity enough to discover a more than ordinary hand in the *petition*. I told him Dr. Johnson had favoured me with his pen. His lordship, with wonderful acumen, pointed out exactly where his composition began, and where it ended. But, that I may do impartial justice, and conform to the great rule of courts, *Suum cuique tribuito*, I must add, that their lordships in general, though they were pleased to call this "a well-drawn paper," preferred the former very inferior petition, which I had written; thus confirming the truth of an observation made to me by one of their number, in a merry mood:—"My dear Sir, give yourself no

trouble in the composition of the papers you present to us; for, indeed, it is casting pearls before swine." (1)

I renewed my solicitations that Dr. Johnson would this year accomplish his long-intended visit to Scotland.

LETTER 144. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"August 13. 1772.

"DEAR SIR, — The regret has not been little with which I have missed a journey so pregnant with pleasing expectations, as that in which I could promise myself not only the gratification of curiosity, both rational and fanciful, but the delight of seeing those whom I love and esteem. But such has been the course of things, that I could not come; and such has been, I am afraid, the state of my body, that it would not well have seconded my inclination. My body, I think, grows better, and I refer my hopes to another year; for I am very sincere in my design to pay the visit, and take the ramble. In the mean time, do not omit any opportunity of keeping up a favourable opinion of me in the minds of any of my friends. Beattie's book (2) is, I believe, every day more liked; at least, I like it more, as I look more upon it.

"I am glad if you got credit by your cause; and am yet of opinion that our cause was good, and that the determination ought to have been in your favour. Poor Hastie [the Schoolmaster], I think, had but his deserts.

(1) The *expression* was coarse, but the *meaning* was correct: the *facts* and the *law* only ought to be considered by the judge — the verbal decorations of style should be of no weight. It is probable that the judge who made use of this homely phrase was bantering Boswell on some pleading in which there was, perhaps, more ornament than substance. — C.

(2) "Essay on Truth," of which a third edition was published in 1772. — C.

"You promised to get me a little Pindar: you may add to it a little Anacreon.

"The leisure which I cannot enjoy, it will be a pleasure to hear that you employ upon the antiquities of the feudal establishment. The whole system of ancient tenures is gradually passing away; and I wish to have the knowledge of it preserved adequate and complete; for such an institution makes a very important part of the history of mankind. Do not forget a design so worthy of a scholar who studies the law of his country, and of a gentleman who may naturally be curious to know the condition of his own ancestors. I am, dear Sir, yours with great affection,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 145. TO DR. JOHNSON.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 25. 1772.

"MY DEAR SIR, — I was much disappointed that you did not come to Scotland last autumn. However, I must own that your letter prevents me from complaining; not only because I am sensible that the state of your health was but too good an excuse, but because you write in a strain which shews that you have agreeable views of the scheme which we have so long proposed.

"I communicated to Beattie what you said of his book in your last letter to me. He writes to me thus: — 'You judge very rightly in supposing that Dr. Johnson's favourable opinion of my book must give me great delight. Indeed, it is impossible for me to say how much I am gratified by it; for there is not a man upon earth whose good opinion I would be more ambitious to cultivate. His talents and his virtues I reverence more than any words can express. The extraordinary civilities (the paternal attentions I should rather say), and the many instructions I have

had the honour to receive from him, will to me be a perpetual source of pleasure in the recollection, —

'*Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos reget artus.*

'I had still some thoughts, while the summer lasted of being obliged to go to London on some little business; otherwise I should certainly have troubled him with a letter several months ago, and given some vent to my gratitude and admiration. This I intend to do as soon as I am left a little at leisure. Mean time, if you have occasion to write to him, I beg you will offer him my most respectful compliments, and assure him of the sincerity of my attachment and the warmth of my gratitude.' I am, &c.

"JAMES BOSWELL." (1)

(1) In the autumn of this year Johnson visited Lichfield and Ashbourne, where, it appears from his letters to Mrs. Thrale, that he was considerably indisposed: —

"Lichfield, Oct. 19. 1772. — I set out on Thursday night, at nine, and arrived at Lichfield on Friday night, at eleven, no otherwise incommoded than with want of sleep, which, however, I enjoyed very comfortably the first night. I think a stage coach is not the worst bed.

"Ashbourne, Nov. 4. 1772. — Since I came to Ashbourne I have been out of order. I was well at Lichfield. You know sickness will drive me to you; so, perhaps, you very heartily wish me better: but you know likewise that health will not hold me away.

"Ashbourne, Nov. 23. 1772. — I cannot yet get well; my nights are flatulent and unquiet; but my days are tolerably easy, and Taylor says that I look much better than when I came hither. You will see when I come; and I can take your word.

"Ashbourne, Nov. 27. 1772. — If you are so kind as to write to me on Saturday, the day on which you will receive this, I shall have it before I leave Ashbourne. I am to go to Lichfield on Wednesday, and purpose to find my way to London through Birmingham and Oxford. I was yesterday at Chatsworth. It is a very fine house. I wish you had been with me to see it; for then, as we are apt to want matter of talk, we should have gained something new to talk on. They complimented me with playing the fountain, and opening the cascade. But I am of my friend's opinion, that, when one has seen the ocean, cascades are but little things." — C.

CHAPTER IX.

1773.

George Steevens. — Letters to Mrs. Thrale, &c. — Goldsmith and Evans the Bookseller. — Dalrymple's History. — Action in Speaking. — Chesterfield and Tyrawley. — The Spectator. — Sir Andrew Freeport. — Burnet's Own Times. — Good Friday. — Easter Day. — A Dinner at Johnson's. — Wages to Women Servants. — Keeping a Journal. — Luxury. — Equality. — The Stuarts. — Law Reports. — "The Gentle Shepherd." — Whigs and Tories. — Sterne. — Charles Townshend. — "Happy Revolution." — "She Stoops to Conquer." — Short-Hand. — Dedications. — James Harris. — Playing on the Fiddle. — Duelling. — Lord Chatham's Verses to Garrick. — Savage Life. — Suicide. — Eustace Budgell. — The Douglas Cause.

In 1773, his only publication was an edition of his folio Dictionary, with additions and corrections; nor did he, so far as is known, furnish any productions of his fertile pen to any of his numerous friends or dependants, except the Preface * to his old amanuensis Macbean's "Dictionary of Ancient Geography." (1) His Shakspeare, indeed, which had been

(1) He, however, wrote, or partly wrote, an Epitaph on Mrs. Bell, wife of his friend John Bell, Esq., brother of the Rev. Dr. Bell, Prebendary of Westminster, which is printed in his works. It is in English prose, and has so little of his manner, that I did not believe he had any hand in it, till I was satisfied of the fact by the authority of Mr. Bell. [See *antè*, p. 165.]

received with high approbation by the public, and gone through several editions, was this year republished by George Steevens, Esq., a gentleman not only deeply skilled in ancient learning, and of very extensive reading in English literature, especially the early writers, but at the same time of acute discernment and elegant taste. It is almost unnecessary to say, that by his great and valuable additions to Dr. Johnson's work, he justly obtained considerable reputation: —

"Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet."

LETTER 146. TO MRS. THRALE.

"Tuesday, Jan. 26. 1773.

"Last night was very tedious, and this day makes no promises of much ease. However, I have this day put on my shoe, and hope that gout is gone. I shall have only the cough to contend with; and I doubt whether I shall get rid of that without change of place. I caught cold in the coach as I went away, and am disordered by very little things. Is it accident or age?"

"Feb. 19. 1773.

"I think I am better, but cannot say much more than that I think so. I was yesterday with Miss Lucy Southwell and Mrs. Williams, at Mr. Southwell's. (1) Miss Frances Southwell is not well. I have an invitation to dine at Sir Joshua Reynolds's on Tuesday. May I accept it?"

(1) Dr. Johnson's early friend, Mr. Edmond Southwell, third son of the first Lord Southwell, born in 1705, had died in the preceding November, aged 67; the Mr. Southwell here mentioned was, probably, Thomas Arthur, afterwards the fourth Lord and second Viscount. (See *ante*, Vol. II. p. 150.) The two ladies mentioned were, probably, daughters of the first lord: Frances, born in 1708, and Lucy, born in 1710. — C.

LETTER 147. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"London, Feb. 22. 1773.

"DEAR SIR, — I have read your kind letter much more than the elegant Pindar which it accompanied. I am always glad to find myself not forgotten; and to be forgotten by you would give me great uneasiness. My northern friends have never been unkind to me: I have from you, dear Sir, testimonies of affection, which I have not often been able to excite; and Dr. Beattie rates the testimony which I was desirous of paying to his merit, much higher than I should have thought it reasonable to expect.

"I have heard of your masquerade.(1) What says your synod to such innovations? I am not studiously scrupulous, nor do I think a masquerade either evil in itself, or very likely to be the occasion of evil; yet, as the world thinks it a very licentious relaxation of manners, I would not have been one of the *first* masquers in a country where no masquerade had ever been before.(2)

"A new edition of my great Dictionary is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise; but, having made no preparation, I was able to do very little. Some superfluities I have expunged, and some faults I have corrected, and here and there have scattered a remark; but the main fabric of the work remains as it was. I had looked very little into it since I wrote it; and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected.

(1) Given by a lady at Edinburgh. — B.

(2) There had been masquerades in Scotland; but not for a very long time. — B. — This masquerade was given on the 15th of January, by the Countess Dowager of Fife. Johnson had no doubt seen an account of it in the Gentleman's Magazine for January, where it is said to have been the first masquerade ever seen in Scotland. Mr. Boswell himself appeared in the character of a Dumb Conjurer. — C.

"Baretti and Davies have had a furious quarrel; a quarrel, I think, irreconcileable. Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it. The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce. The dialogue is quick and gay, and the incidents are so prepared as not to seem improbable. (1)

"I am sorry that you lost your cause of Intromission, because I yet think the arguments on your side unanswerable. But you seem, I think, to say that you gained reputation even by your defeat; and reputation you will daily gain, if you keep Lord Auchinleck's precept in your mind, and endeavour to consolidate in your mind a firm and regular system of law, instead of picking up occasional fragments.

"My health seems in general to improve; but I have been troubled for many weeks with a vexatious catarrh, which is sometimes sufficiently distressful. I have not found any great effects from bleeding and physic; and am afraid, that I must expect help from brighter days and softer air.

"Write to me now and then; and whenever any good befalls you, make haste to let me know it; for no one will rejoice at it more than, dear Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"You continue to stand very high in the favour of Mrs. Thrale."

While a former edition of my work was passing through the press, I was unexpectedly favoured

(1) ["She Stoops to Conquer, or the Mistakes of a Night," was performed, for the first time, at Covent Garden, on the 15th of March.]

with a packet from Philadelphia, from Mr. James Abercrombie, a gentleman of that country, who is pleased to honour me with very high praise of my "Life of Dr. Johnson." To have the fame of my illustrious friend, and his faithful biographer, echoed from the New World is extremely flattering; and my grateful acknowledgments shall be wafted across the Atlantic. Mr. Abercrombie has politely conferred on me a considerable additional obligation, by transmitting to me copies of two letters from Dr. Johnson to American gentlemen. "Gladly, Sir," says he, "would I have sent you the originals; but being the only relics of the kind in America, they are considered by the possessors of such inestimable value, that no possible consideration would induce them to part with them. In some future publication of yours relative to that great and good man, they may perhaps be thought worthy of insertion."

LETTER 148. TO MR. B——D. (1)

"Johnson's Court, March 4. 1773.

"SIR,—That in the hurry of a sudden departure you should yet find leisure to consult my convenience, is a degree of kindness, and an instance of regard, not only beyond my claims, but above my expectation. You are not mistaken in supposing that I set a high value on my American friends, and that you should confer a

(1) This gentleman, who now resides in America, in a public character of considerable dignity, desired that his name might not be transcribed at full length.—B.—Probably a Mr. Richard Bland, of Virginia, whose "Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies" was republished in London in 1770.—C.

very valuable favour upon me by giving me an opportunity of keeping myself in their memory.

"I have taken the liberty of troubling you with a packet, to which I wish a safe and speedy conveyance, because I wish a safe and speedy voyage to him that conveys it. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 149. TO THE REV. MR. WHITE. (1)

"Johnson's Court, March 4. 1773.

"DEAR SIR, — Your kindness for your friends accompanies you across the Atlantic. It was long since observed by Horace, that no ship could leave care behind: you have been attended in your voyage by other powers, — by benevolence and constancy; and I hope care did not often show her face in their company.

"I received the copy of Rasselas. The impression is not magnificent, but it flatters an author, because the printer seems to have expected that it would be scattered among the people. The little book has been well received, and is translated into Italian, French, German, and Dutch. It has now one honour more by an American edition.

"I know not that much has happened since your departure that can engage your curiosity. Of all public transactions the whole world is now informed by the newspapers. Opposition seems to despond; and the dissenters, though they have taken advantage of unsettled times, and a government much enfeebled, seem not likely to gain any immunities.

(1) Now Dr. White, and Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania. During his first visit to England in 1771, as a candidate for holy orders, he was several times in company with Dr. Johnson, who expressed a wish to see the edition of Rasselas, which Dr. White told him had been printed in America. Dr. White, on his return, immediately sent him a copy.

"Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy in rehearsal at Covent Garden, to which the manager predicts ill success. I hope he will be mistaken. I think it deserves a very kind reception.

"I shall soon publish a new edition of my large Dictionary. I have been persuaded to revise it, and have mended some faults, but added little to its usefulness.

"No book has been published since your departure, of which much notice is taken. Faction only fills the town with pamphlets, and greater subjects are forgotten in the noise of discord.

"Thus have I written, only to tell you how little I have to tell. Of myself I can only add, that having been afflicted many weeks with a very troublesome cough, I am now recovered.

"I take the liberty which you give me of troubling you with a letter, of which you will please to fill up the direction. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"Sam. Johnson."

Letter 150. TO W. S. JOHNSON LL.D. (1),

Stratford, Connecticut.

"Johnson's Court, March 4. 1773.

"Sir,—Of all those whom the various accidents of life have brought within my notice, there is scarce any man whose acquaintance I have more desired to cultivate than yours. I cannot indeed charge you with

(1) The late William Samuel Johnson of Connecticut. This gentleman spent several years in England about the middle of the last century. He received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law from the University of Oxford; and this circumstance, together with the accidental similarity of name, recommended him to the acquaintance of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Several letters passed between them, after the American Dr. Johnson had returned to his native country; of which, however, it is feared that this is the only one remaining. — Gent. Mag.

neglecting me, yet our mutual inclination could never gratify itself with opportunities. The current of the day always bore us away from one another, and now the Atlantic is between us.

"Whether you carried away an impression of me as pleasing as that which you left me of yourself, I know not; if you did, you have not forgotten me, and will be glad that I do not forget you. Merely to be remembered is indeed a barren pleasure, but it is one of the pleasures which is more sensibly felt as human nature is more exalted.

"To make you wish that I should have you in my mind, I would be glad to tell you something which you do not know; but all public affairs are printed; and as you and I have no common friend, I can tell you no private history.

"The government, I think, grow stronger; but I am afraid the next general election will be a time of uncommon turbulence, violence, and outrage.

"Of literature no great product has appeared, or is expected; the attention of the people has for some years been otherwise employed.

"I was told a day or two ago of a design which must excite some curiosity. Two ships are in preparation, which are under the command of Captain Constantine Phipps, to explore the northern ocean; not to seek the north-east or the north-west passage, but to sail directly north, as near the pole as they can go. They hope to find an open ocean, but I suspect it is one mass of perpetual congelation. I do not much wish well to discoveries, for I am always afraid they will end in conquest and robbery.

"I have been out of order this winter, but am grown better. Can I never hope to see you again, or must I be always content to tell you that in another hemisphere I am, Sir, your most humble servant?

"SAM. JOHNSON."

LETTER 151. TO MRS. THRALE.

"March 25. 1773.

"DID not I tell you that I had written to Boswell? He has answered my letter. I am going this evening to put young Otway to school with Mr. Elphinston.

"C—— (1) is so distressed with abuse about his play that he has solicited Goldsmith to *take him off the rack of the newspapers*. M—— (2) is preparing a whole pamphlet against G——(2); and G—— is, I suppose, collecting materials to confute M——.

Jennens (3) has published Hamlet, but without a preface, and S—— (4) declares his intention of letting him pass the rest of his life in peace. Here is news."

On Saturday, April 3., the day after my arrival in London this year, I went to his house late in the evening, and sat with Mrs. Williams till he came home. I found in the London Chronicle, Dr. Goldsmith's apology to the public for beating Evans, a bookseller, on account of a paragraph (5) in a newspaper published by him, which Goldsmith thought

(1) Richard Cumberland. The play in question was the "Choleric Man," which he afterwards published with a "Dedication to Detraction." He was very sensitive to such attacks, as Sheridan more than hints in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary, which was intended for him. — C.

(2) These initials, no doubt, mean Mickle and Garrick (see Garrick's letter to Boswell, *post*, 23d Oct. 1773): the quarrel was on the subject of the "Siege of Marseilles." See Mickle's Life in "Anderson's British Poets." — C.

(3) Soame Jenyns. — C.

(4) George Steevens. — C.

(5) The offence given was a long abusive letter in the London Packet. A particular account of this transaction, and Goldsmith's Vindication (for such it was, rather than an Apology), may be found in the Life of that poet, prefixed to his Miscellaneous Works. — M.

impertinent to him and to a lady of his acquaintance. The apology was written so much in Dr. Johnson's manner, that both Mrs. Williams and I supposed it to be his; but when he came home, he soon undeceived us. When he said to Mrs. Williams, "Well, Dr. Goldsmith's *manifesto* has got into your paper;" I asked him if Dr. Goldsmith had written it, with an air that made him see I suspected it was his, though subscribed by Goldsmith. JOHNSON. "Sir, Dr. Goldsmith would no more have asked me to write such a thing as that for him, than he would have asked me to feed him with a spoon, or to do any thing else that denoted his imbecility. I as much believe that he wrote it, as if I had seen him do it. Sir, had he shown it to any one friend, he would not have been allowed to publish it. He has, indeed, done it very well; but it is a foolish thing well done. I suppose he has been so much elated with the success of his new comedy, that he has thought every thing that concerned him must be of importance to the public." BOSWELL. "I fancy, Sir, this is the first time that he has been engaged in such an adventure." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I believe it is the first time he has *beat* (1); he may have *been beaten* before. This, Sir, is a new plume to him."

I mentioned Sir John Dalrymple's "Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland," and his discoveries to

(1) Mr. Chalmers, in the article "Goldsmith," in the Biog. Dict., states, on the authority of Evans, that *he* had beaten Goldsmith, and not Goldsmith him; but surely, in such a case, the authority of Evans would be suspicious, even if it were not opposed to the whole current of cotemporary evidence. — C.

the prejudice of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, every body who had just notions of government thought them rascals before. It is well that all mankind now see them to be rascals." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, may not those discoveries be true without their being rascals?" JOHNSON. "Consider, Sir; would any of them have been willing to have had it known that they intrigued with France? Depend upon it, Sir, he who does what he is afraid should be known, has something rotten about him. This Dalrymple seems to be an honest fellow; for he tells equally what makes against both sides. But nothing can be poorer than his mode of writing, it is the mere bouncing of a schoolboy: Great He! but greater She! and such stuff." (1)

I could not agree with him in this criticism: for though Sir John Dalrymple's style is not regularly formed in any respect, and one cannot help smiling sometimes at his affected *grandiloquence*, there is in his writing a pointed vivacity, and much of a gentlemanly spirit.

At Mr. Thrale's, in the evening, he repeated his usual paradoxical declamation against action in public speaking. "Action can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action; you hold up your hand thus, because

(1) A bombastic ode of Oldham's on Ben Jonson, begins thus: "GREAT THOU!" which perhaps his namesake remembered. — M. — [Mr. Malone's note is absurd. Johnson, as Mr. Hallam very justly observed to me, clearly meant Dalrymple's description of the parting of Lord and Lady Russell — "*He great in this last act of his life, but she greater.*" — C. 1835.]

he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them." MRS. THRALE. "What then, Sir, becomes of Demosthenes's saying? 'Action, action, action!'" JOHNSON. "Demosthenes, Madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes; to a barbarous people."

I thought it extraordinary, that he should deny the power of rhetorical action upon human nature, when it is proved by innumerable facts in all stages of society. Reasonable beings are not solely reasonable. They have fancies which may be pleased, passions which may be roused.

Lord Chesterfield being mentioned, Johnson remarked, that almost all of that celebrated nobleman's witty sayings were puns. He, however, allowed the merit of good wit to his lordship's saying of Lord Tyrawley (1) and himself, when both very old and infirm: "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years; but we don't choose to have it known."

He talked with approbation of an intended edition of "The Spectator," with notes; two volumes of which had been prepared by a gentleman eminent in the literary world (2), and the materials which he had collected for the remainder had been transferred to another hand. He observed, that all works which describe manners, require notes in sixty

(1) [James O'Hara, Lord Tyrawley, a distinguished general and diplomatist, was born in 1690, and died July 13. 1773.]

(2) Mr. Chalmers (who, himself, has ably performed this task) informs me, that the first of these gentlemen was Dr. Percy, and the second Dr. John Calder, of whom some account will be found, Gent. Mag. v. 85. p. 564. — C.

or seventy years, or less; and told us, he had communicated all he knew that could throw light upon "The Spectator." He said, "Addison had made his Sir Andrew Freeport a true Whig, arguing against giving charity to beggars, and throwing out other such ungracious sentiments; but that he had thought better, and made amends by making him found an hospital for decayed farmers." He called for the volume of "The Spectator," in which that account is contained, and read it aloud to us. He read so well, that every thing acquired additional weight and grace from his utterance.

The conversation having turned on modern imitations of ancient ballads, and some one having praised their simplicity, he treated them with that ridicule which he always displayed when that subject was mentioned.

He disapproved of introducing scripture phrases into secular discourse. This seemed to me a question of some difficulty. A scripture expression may be used, like a highly classical phrase, to produce an instantaneous strong impression; and it may be done without being at all improper. Yet I own there is danger, that applying the language of our sacred book to ordinary subjects may tend to lessen our reverence for it. If therefore it be introduced at all, it should be with very great caution.

On Thursday, April 8., I sat a good part of the evening with him, but he was very silent. He said, "Burnet's 'History of his own Times,' is very entertaining. The style, indeed, is mere chit-chat. I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied; but he

was so much prejudiced, that he took no pains to find out the truth. He was like a man who resolves to regulate his time by a certain watch; but will not inquire whether the watch is right or not."

Though he was not disposed to talk, he was unwilling that I should leave him; and when I looked at my watch, and told him it was twelve o'clock, he cried, "What's that to you and me?" and ordered Frank to tell Mrs. Williams that we were coming to drink tea with her, which we did. It was settled that we should go to church together next day.

On the 9th of April, being Good Friday, I breakfasted with him on tea and cross-buns; *Doctor* Levett, as Frank called him, making the tea. He carried me with him to the church of St. Clement Danes, where he had his seat; and his behaviour was, as I had imaged to myself, solemnly devout. I never shall forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: — "In the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us."

We went to church both in the morning and evening. In the interval between the two services we did not dine; but he read in the Greek New Testament, and I turned over several of his books.

In Archbishop Laud's Diary, I found the following passage, which I read to Dr. Johnson: —

"1623. February 1., Sunday. I stood by the most illustrious Prince Charles (1), at dinner. He was then very merry, and talked occasionally of many things with his attendants. Among other things, he said, that if he were necessitated to take any particular profession

(1) Afterwards Charles I.

of life, he could not be a lawyer, adding his reasons: 'I cannot,' saith he, 'defend a bad, nor yield in a good cause.'"

JOHNSON. "Sir, this is false reasoning; because every cause has a bad side: and a lawyer is not overcome, though the cause which he has endeavoured to support be determined against him."

I told him that Goldsmith had said to me a few days before, "As I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the tailor, so I take my religion from the priest." I regretted this loose way of talking. JOHNSON. "Sir, he knows nothing; he has made up his mind about nothing."

To my great surprise he asked me to dine with him on Easter Day. I never supposed that he had a dinner at his house; for I had not then heard of any one of his friends having been entertained at his table. He told me, "I generally have a meat pie on Sunday: it is baked at a public oven, which is very properly allowed, because one man can attend it; and thus the advantage is obtained of not keeping servants from church to dress dinners."

April 11., being Easter Sunday, after having attended divine service at St. Paul's, I repaired to Dr. Johnson's. I had gratified my curiosity much in dining with JEAN JAQUES ROUSSEAU, while he lived in the wilds of Neufchâtel: I had as great a curiosity to dine with DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in the dusky recess of a court in Fleet Street. I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange, uncouth, ill-drest dish: but I found every thing in very good order. We had no other company but Mrs. Williams and a young woman

whom I did not know. As a dinner here was considered as a singular phenomenon, and as I was frequently interrogated on the subject, my readers may perhaps be desirous to know our bill of fare. Foote, I remember, in allusion to Francis, the *negro*, was willing to suppose that our repast was *black broth*. But the fact was, that we had a very good soup, a boiled leg of lamb and spinach, a veal pie (1), and a rice pudding.

Of Dr. John Campbell, the author, he said, "He is a very inquisitive and a very able man, and a man of good religious principles, though I am afraid he has been deficient in practice. Campbell is radically right; and we may hope, that in time there will be good practice."

He owned that he thought Hawkesworth was one of his imitators, but he did not think Goldsmith (2) was. Goldsmith, he said, had great merit. BOSWELL. "But, Sir, he is much indebted to you for his getting so high in the public estimation." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, he has, perhaps, got *sooner* to it by his intimacy with me."

Goldsmith, though his vanity often excited him to occasional competition, had a very high regard for Johnson, which he had at this time expressed in the strongest manner in the Dedication of his comedy, entitled, "She Stoops to Conquer." (3)

(1) Mr. Boswell does not say whether the pie had the extraordinary addition of "plums and sugar," which Mrs. Piozzi tells us were ingredients in Dr. Johnson's veal pies. See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 260. — C.

(2) See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 194. — C.

(3) "By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me

Johnson observed, that there were very few books printed in Scotland before the union. He had seen a complete collection of them in the possession of the Hon. Archibald Campbell, a non-juring bishop.(1) I wish this collection had been kept entire. Many of them are in the library of the faculty of advocates at Edinburgh. I told Dr. Johnson that I had some intention to write the life of the learned and worthy Thomas Ruddiman.(2) He said, "I should take pleasure in helping you to do honour to him. But his farewell letter to the faculty of Advocates, when he resigned the office of their librarian, should have been in Latin."

I put a question to him upon a fact in common life, which he could not answer, nor have I found any one else who could. What is the reason that women servants, though obliged to be at the expense of purchasing their own clothes, have much lower wages than men servants, to whom a great proportion of that article is furnished, and when in fact our female house-servants work much harder than the male? (3)

He told me that he had twelve or fourteen times attempted to keep a journal of his life, but never

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some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety."

(1) See an account of this learned and respectable gentleman, and of his curious work on the "Middle State," *post*, Oct. 25. 1773.

(2) [See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 246.]

(3) There is a greater variety of employment for men, than for women: therefore the demand raises the price.—KEARNEY.

could persevere. He advised me to do it. "The great thing to be recorded," said he, "is the state of your own mind; and you should write down every thing that you remember, for you cannot judge at first what is good or bad; and write immediately while the impression is fresh, for it will not be the same a week afterwards."

I again solicited him to communicate to me the particulars of his early life. He said, "You shall have them all for twopence. I hope you shall know a great deal more of me before you write my Life." He mentioned to me this day many circumstances, which I wrote down when I went home, and have interwoven in the former part of this narrative.

"April 11. 1773. I had more disturbance in the night than has been customary for some weeks past. I rose before nine in the morning, and prayed and drank tea. I came, I think, to church in the beginning of the prayers. I did not distinctly hear the Psalms, and found that I had been reading the Psalms for Good Friday. I went through the Litany, after a short disturbance, with tolerable attention.

"After sermon, I perused my prayer in the pew then went nearer the altar, and being introduced into another pew, used my prayer again, and recommended my relations, with Bathurst and [Miss] Boothby, then my wife again by herself. Then I went nearer the altar, and read the collects chosen for meditation. I prayed for Salusbury (1), and, I think, the Thrales. I then communicated with calmness, used the collect for Easter Day, and returning to the first pew, prayed my prayer the third time. I came home again; used my

(1) Mrs. Salusbury, Mrs. Thrale's mother. — C.

prayer and the Easter Collect. Then went into the study to Boswell, and read the Greek Testament. Then dined, and when Boswell went away, ended the four first chapters of St. Matthew, and the Beatitudes of the fifth. I then went to Evening Prayers, and was composed. I gave the pew-keepers each five shillings and threepence." (1)

On Tuesday, April 13., he and Dr. Goldsmith and I dined at General Oglethorpe's. Goldsmith expatiated on the common topic, that the race of our people was degenerated, and that this was owing to luxury. JOHNSON. "Sir, in the first place, I doubt the fact. (2) I believe there are as many tall men in England now, as ever there were. But, secondly, supposing the stature of our people to be diminished, that is not owing to luxury; for, Sir, consider to how very small a proportion of our people luxury can reach. Our soldiery, surely, are not luxurious, who live on sixpence a day; and the same remark will apply to almost all the other classes. Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people; it will strengthen and multiply them. Sir, no nation was ever hurt by luxury; for, as I said before, it can reach but to a very few. I admit that the great increase of commerce and manufactures hurts the military spirit of a people; because it pro-

(1) [Quarter guineas were at that time in circulation.]

(2) There seems no reason whatever to believe the fact: old coffins and old armour do not designate a taller race of men. The doors, windows, and ceilings of old houses are not loftier than those of modern days. Other animals, too, cannot have degenerated in size by the *luxury of man*; and they seem, by all evidence, to have borne in old times the same proportion to the human figure that they now bear. — C.

duces a competition for something else than martial honours, — a competition for riches. It also hurts the bodies of the people; for you will observe, there is no man who works at any particular trade, but you may know him from his appearance to do so. One part or the other of his body being more used than the rest, he is in some degree deformed: but, Sir, that is not luxury. A tailor sits cross-legged; but that is not luxury." GOLDSMITH. "Come, you're just going to the same place by another road." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I say that is not *luxury*. Let us take a walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel, through, I suppose, the greatest series of shops in the world: what is there in any of these shops (if you except gin-shops) that can do any human being any harm?" GOLDSMITH. "Well, Sir, I'll accept your challenge. The very next shop to Northumberland House is a pickle-shop." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir: do we not know that a maid can in one afternoon make pickles sufficient to serve a whole family for a year? nay, that five pickle-shops can serve all the kingdom? Besides, Sir, there is no harm done to any body by the making of pickles, or the eating of pickles."

We drank tea with the ladies; and Goldsmith sung Tony Lumpkin's song in his comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," and a very pretty one, to an Irish tune (1), which he had designed for Miss Hard-

(1) The humours of Ballamagairy. — B. This air was revived and vulgarised in a song sung by the late Mr. Johnstone, in a farce [by Colman] called "The Wags of Windsor." Mr. Moore has brought it back into good company; it is to be found in the ninth number of his Irish Melodies, p. 48. — C.

castle; but as Mrs. Bulkeley, who played the part, could not sing, it was left out. He afterwards wrote it down for me, by which means it was preserved, and now appears amongst his poems. (1) Dr. Johnson, in his way home, stopped at my lodgings in Piccadilly, and sat with me, drinking tea a second time, till a late hour.

I told him that Mrs. Macaulay said, she wondered how he could reconcile his political principles with his moral: his notions of inequality and subordination with wishing well to the happiness of all mankind, who might live so agreeably, had they all their portions of land, and none to domineer over another. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I reconcile my principles very well, because mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination. Were they to be in this pretty state of equality, they would soon degenerate into brutes; they would become Monboddo's nation; their tails would grow. Sir, all would be losers, were all to work for all: they would have no intellectual improvement. All intellectual improvement arises from leisure; all leisure arises from one working for another."

Talking of the family of Stuart, he said, "It should seem that the family at present on the throne has now established as good a right as the former family, by the long consent of the people; and that to disturb this right might be considered as culpable.

(1) ["Ah, me! when shall I marry me?
Lovers are plenty; but fail to relieve me:
He, fond youth, that could carry me,
Offers to love, but means to deceive me." &c.]

At the same time I own, that it is a very difficult question, when considered with respect to the house of Stuart. To oblige people to take oaths as to the disputed right, is wrong. I know not whether I could take them; but I do not blame those who do." So conscientious and so delicate was he upon this subject, which has occasioned so much clamour against him.

Talking of law cases, he said, "The English reports, in general, are very poor: only the half of what has been said is taken down; and of that half, much is mistaken. Whereas, in Scotland, the arguments on each side are deliberately put in writing, to be considered by the court. I think a collection of your cases upon subjects of importance, with the opinions of the Judges upon them, would be valuable."

On Thursday, April 15., I dined with him and Dr. Goldsmith at General Paoli's. We found here Signor Martinelli (1) of Florence, author of a History of England in Italian, printed at London.

I spoke of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," in the Scottish dialect, as the best pastoral that had ever been written; not only abounding with beautiful rural imagery, and just and pleasing sentiments, but being a real picture of manners; and I offered

(1) Vincenzio Martinelli instructed many of our nobility in his native idiom. His History of England, in two quarto volumes, is a mere compilation from Rapin. An octavo volume of his "Lettere Familiare," is rather amusing, for the complacency of the writer respecting his own importance, and the narratives of his visits to various noblemen, whose names spangle his pages. — D'ISRAELI.

to teach Dr. Johnson to understand it. "No, Sir," said he, "I won't learn it. You shall retain your superiority by my not knowing it."

This brought on a question whether one man is lessened by another's acquiring an equal degree of knowledge with him. Johnson asserted the affirmative. I maintained that the position might be true in those kinds of knowledge which produce wisdom, power, and force, so as to enable one man to have the government of others; but that a man is not in any degree lessened by others knowing as well as he what ends in mere pleasure: — "eating fine fruits, drinking delicious wines, reading exquisite poetry."

The general observed, that Martinelli was a Whig. JOHNSON. "I am sorry for it. It shows the spirit of the times: he is obliged to temporise." BOSWELL. "I rather think, Sir, that Toryism prevails in this reign." JOHNSON. "I know not why you should think so, Sir. You see your friend Lord Lyttelton, a nobleman, is obliged in his History (1) to write the most vulgar Whiggism."

An animated debate took place whether Martinelli should continue his History of England to the present day. GOLDSMITH. "To be sure he should." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; he would give great offence. He would have to tell of almost all the living great what they do not wish told." GOLDSMITH. "It may, perhaps, be necessary for a native to be more cau-

(1) [History of Henry the Second, "a production elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with such anxiety as only vanity can dictate." — JOHNSON, "Life of Lyttelton."]

tious; but a foreigner who comes among us without prejudice, may be considered as holding the place of a judge, and may speak his mind freely." JOHNSON. "Sir, a foreigner, when he sends a work from the press, ought to be on his guard against catching the error and mistaken enthusiasm of the people among whom he happens to be." GOLDSMITH. "Sir, he wants only to sell his history, and to tell truth; one an honest, the other a laudable motive." JOHNSON. "Sir, they are both laudable motives. It is laudable in a man to wish to live by his labours; but he should write so as he may *live* by them, not so as he may be knocked on the head. I would advise him to be at Calais before he publishes his history of the present age. A foreigner who attaches himself to a political party in this country, is in the worst state that can be imagined: he is looked upon as a mere intermeddler. A native may do it from interest." BOSWELL. "Or principle." GOLDSMITH. "There are people who tell a hundred political lies every day, and are not hurt by it. Surely, then, one may tell truth with safety." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, in the first place, he who tells a hundred lies has disarmed the force of his lies. But besides; a man had rather have a hundred lies told of him, than one truth which he does not wish should be told." GOLDSMITH. "For my part, I'd tell truth, and shame the devil." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but the devil will be angry. I wish to shame the devil as much as you do, but I should choose to be out of the reach of his claws." GOLDSMITH. "His claws

can do you no harm, when you have the shield of truth."

It having been observed that there was little hospitality in London: JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited in London. The man, Sterne, I have been told, has had engagements for three months." GOLDSMITH. "And a very dull fellow." JOHNSON. "Why, no, Sir." (1)

Martinelli told us, that for several years he lived much with Charles Townshend (2), and that he ventured to tell him he was a bad joker. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, thus much I can say upon the subject. One day he and a few more agreed to go and dine in the country, and each of them was to bring a friend in his carriage with him. Charles Townshend asked Fitzherbert to go with him, but told him, "You must find somebody to bring you back: I can only carry you there." Fitzherbert did not much like this arrangement. He however, consented, observing sarcastically, 'It will do very well; for then the same jokes will serve you in returning as in going.'"

(1) Sterne, as may be supposed, was no great favourite with Dr. Johnson; and a lady once ventured to ask him how he liked Yorick's sermons "I know nothing about them, madam," was his reply. But some time afterwards, forgetting himself, he severely censured them, and the lady very aptly retorted, "I understood you to say, Sir, that you had never read them." "No, madam, I did read them, but it was in a stage-coach. I should never have deigned even to look at them had I been at large."— Crad. Mem. p. 208. — C.

(2) [The Right Hon. Charles Townshend, only brother of Lord Townshend. This able statesman and orator died Sept. 4, 1767, in his forty-first year.]

An eminent public character (1) being mentioned; —JOHNSON. "I remember being present when he showed himself to be so corrupted, or at least something so different from what I think right, as to maintain, that a member of parliament should go along with his party right or wrong. Now, Sir, this is so remote from native virtue, from scholastic virtue, that a good man must have undergone a great change before he can reconcile himself to such a doctrine. It is maintaining that you may lie to the

(1) I once thought pretty confidently, that the "*eminent public character*" was Mr. Fox, and the friend of Johnson's, who had become too much the "*echo*" of the former, Mr. Burke; but Lord Wellesley and Sir James Mackintosh, who have been so kind as to favour me with their advice on this and other points, think that Mr. Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds were meant, doubting whether Mr. Fox was, in 1773, sufficiently prominent to be designated as "an eminent public character," whom Mr. Burke (whose reputation was then at its maturity) could be said to "echo." Mr. Chalmers, on the whole, *inclines* to the same opinion, though he agrees with me, that the distant and formal manner in which the *eminent character* is spoken of, and the allusion to his being "*already bought*," (that is, being already in office,) suit Mr. Fox better than Mr. Burke. We all, however, agree that Mr. Burke was *one* of the persons meant; the designation of *eminent public character* was, in 1773, more appropriate to him than to Fox. Mr. Fox, too, had lately changed his party, while Burke always maintained the opinion alluded to, (see *post*, 15th August, 1773,) and he was, indeed, the first who, in his "Thoughts on the Present Discontents," openly avowed and advocated the principle of inviolable adherence to political connections, "putting," as Mr. Prior says, "to silence the hitherto common reproach applied to most public characters of being *party*-men."—Life of Burke, vol. i. p. 232. Which of their other friends was the *echo* cannot be affirmed — perhaps Sir Joshua Reynolds. "This is an instance," as Sir James Mackintosh *observes*, "which proves that the task of elucidating Boswell has not been undertaken too soon." — CROKER. [Although Mr. Fox could hardly perhaps be called an eminent public character at the date of this conversation — he might very naturally be so designated *by Boswell*, when preparing his book for the press many years afterwards. —*J. G. L.*]

public; for you lie when you call that right which you think wrong, or the reverse. A friend of ours, who is too much an echo of that gentleman, observed, that a man who does not stick uniformly to a party, is only waiting to be bought. Why then, said I, he is only waiting to be what that gentleman is already."

We talked of the king's coming to see Goldsmith's new play—"I wish he would," said Goldsmith: adding, however, with an affected indifference, "Not that it would do me the least good." JOHNSON. "Well then, Sir, let us say it would do *him* good (laughing). No, Sir, this affectation will not pass;—it is mighty idle. In such a state as ours, who would not wish to please the chief magistrate?" GOLDSMITH. "I *do* wish to please him. I remember a line in Dryden,—

'And every poet is the monarch's friend.'

It ought to be reversed:" JOHNSON. "Nay, there are finer lines in Dryden on this subject:—

'For colleges on bounteous Kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.'"

General Paoli observed, that successful rebels might. MARTINELLI. "Happy rebellions." GOLDSMITH. "We have no such phrase." GENERAL PAOLI. "But have you not the *thing*?" GOLDSMITH. "Yes; all our *happy* revolutions. They have hurt our constitution, and will hurt it, till we mend it by another HAPPY REVOLUTION."—I never before discovered that my friend Goldsmith had so much of the old prejudice in him.

General Paoli, talking of Goldsmith's new play, said, "*Il a fait un compliment très-gracieux à une certaine grande dame;*" meaning a duchess of the first rank. (1)

I expressed a doubt whether Goldsmith intended it, in order that I might hear the truth from himself. It, perhaps, was not quite fair to endeavour to bring him to a confession, as he might not wish to avow positively his taking part against the Court. He smiled and hesitated. The general at once relieved him, by this beautiful image: "*Monsieur Goldsmith est comme la mer, qui jette des perles et beaucoup d'autres belles choses, sans s'en appercevoir.*" GOLDSMITH. "*Très bien dit, et très élégamment.*"

A person was mentioned, who it was said could take down in short-hand the speeches in parliament with perfect exactness. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is impossible. I remember one Angel (2), who came to me to write for him a preface or dedication to a book upon short-hand, and he professed to write as fast as a man could speak. In order to try him, I took down a book, and read while he wrote; and I favoured him, for I read more deliberately than usual. I had proceeded but a very little way, when he begged I would desist, for he could not follow

(1) The lady, no doubt, was the Duchess of Cumberland, whose marriage made a great noise about this time. The "*compliment*" has escaped my observation, unless it be Hastings's speech to Miss Neville, in the second act, when he proposes to her to fly "to France, where, even among slaves, *the laws of marriage are respected.*" — C.

(2) [John Angel published, in 1759, "Stenography, or Short-Hand Improved."]

me." Hearing now for the first time of this preface or dedication, I said, "What an expense, Sir, do you put us to in buying books, to which you have written prefaces or dedications." JOHNSON. "Why, I have dedicated to the royal family all round; that is to say, to the last generation of the royal family." GOLDSMITH. "And perhaps, Sir, not one sentence of wit in a whole dedication." JOHNSON. "Perhaps not, Sir." BOSWELL. "What then is the reason for applying to a particular person to do that which any one may do as well?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, one man has greater readiness at doing it than another."

"I spoke of Mr. Harris (1), of Salisbury, as being a very learned man, and in particular an eminent Grecian. JOHNSON. "I am not sure of that. His friends give him out as such, but I know not who of his friends are able to judge of it." (2) GOLDSMITH. "He is what is much better: he is a worthy humane man." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, that is not to the purpose of our argument: that will as much prove that he can play upon the fiddle as well as Giardini, as that he is an eminent Grecian." GOLDSMITH. "The greatest musical performers have but small emoluments. Giardini, I am told, does not get above seven hundred a year." JOHNSON. "That is indeed

(1) [James Harris, Esq., father of the first Earl of Malmesbury, was born in 1709, and died in 1780. In 1801, his son published a magnificent edition of his works in two volumes quarto.]

(2) Of James Harris's Dedication to his "Hermes" I have heard Mr. Johnson observe, that, though but fourteen lines long, there were six grammatical faults in it. — PIOZZI.

but little for a man to get, who does best that which so many endeavour to do. There is nothing, I think, in which the power of art is shown so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all other things we can do something at first. Any man will forge a bar of iron, if you give him a hammer; not so well as a smith, but tolerably. A man will saw a piece of wood, and make a box, though a clumsy one; but give him a fiddle and a fiddlestick, and he can do nothing."

On Monday, April 19., he called on me with Mrs. Williams, in Mr. Strahan's coach, and carried me out to dine with Mr. Elphinston, at his academy at Kensington. A printer having acquired a fortune sufficient to keep his coach, was a good topic for the credit of literature. Mrs. Williams said, that another printer, Mr. Hamilton [1], had not waited so long as Mr. Strahan, but had kept his coach several years sooner. JOHNSON. "He was in the right. Life is short. The sooner that a man begins to enjoy his wealth, the better."

Mr. Elphinston talked of a new book that was much admired, and asked Dr. Johnson if he had read it. JOHNSON. "I have looked into it." "What," said Elphinston, "have you not read it through?" Johnson, offended at being thus pressed, and so obliged to own his cursory mode of reading, answered tartly, "No, Sir, do *you* read books *through*?"

(1) The Hamiltons were respectable publishers for three generations. — C.

He this day again defended duelling, and put his argument upon what I have ever thought the most solid basis; that if public war be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so. Indeed we may observe what strained arguments are used to reconcile war with the Christian religion. But, in my opinion, it is exceedingly clear that duelling having better reasons for its barbarous violence, is more justifiable than war in which thousands go forth without any cause of personal quarrel, and massacre each other.

On Wednesday, April 21., I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's. A gentleman attacked Garrick for being vain. JOHNSON. "No wonder, Sir, that he is vain; a man who is perpetually flattered in every mode that can be conceived. So many bellows have blown the fire, that one wonders he is not by this time become a cinder." BOSWELL. "And such bellows too! Lord Mansfield with his cheeks like to burst: Lord Chatham like an Æolus. (1) I have read such notes from them to him, as were enough to turn his head." JOHNSON. "True. When he whom every body else flatters, flatters me, I then am truly happy." MRS. THRALE. "The sentiment is

(1) Lord Chatham addressed to him the very pretty lines: —

"Leave, Garrick, leave the landscape, proudly gay,
Docks, forts, and navies, bright'ning all the bay;
To my plain roof repair, primeval seat!
Yet there no wonders your quick eye can meet,
Save should you deem it wonderful to find
Ambition cured, and an unpassion'd mind . . .
Come, then, immortal spirit of the stage,
Great nature's proxy, glass of every age,
Come, taste the simple life of patriarchs old,
Who, rich in rural peace, ne'er thought of pomp or gold," &c. — C.

in Congreve, I think." JOHNSON. "Yes, Madam, in, 'The Way of the World:'—

" If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me."

No, Sir, I should not be surprised though Garrick chained the ocean and lashed the winds." BOSWELL. "Should it not be, Sir, lashed the ocean and chained the winds?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; recollect the original:—

'In Corum atque Eurum solitus sævire flagellis
Barbarus, Æolio nunquam hoc in carcere passos,
Ipsum compedibus qui vinxerat Ennosigæum.'"

This does very well, when both the winds and the sea are personified, and mentioned by their mythological names, as in Juvenal; but when they are mentioned in plain language, the application of the epithets suggested by me is the most obvious; and accordingly my friend himself, in his imitation of the passage which describes Xerxes, has—

'The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind.'(1)

The modes of living in different countries, and the various views with which men travel in quest of new scenes, having been talked of, a learned gentleman who holds a considerable office in the law, expatiated on the happiness of a savage life; and mentioned an instance of an officer who had actually lived for some time in the wilds of America, of whom, when in that state, he quoted this reflection with an air of admir-

(1) So also Butler, Hudibras, p. ii. c. i. v. 845.:—

"A Persian Emperor whipt his grannam,
The sea, his mother Venus came on."—M.

ation, as if it had been deeply philosophical: "Here am I, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of Nature, with this Indian woman by my side, and this gun, with which I can procure food when I want it: what more can be desired for human happiness?" It did not require much sagacity to foresee that such a sentiment would not be permitted to pass without due animadversion. JOHNSON. "Do not allow yourself, Sir, to be imposed upon by such gross absurdity. It is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might as well exclaim, — Here am I with this cow and this grass; what being can enjoy greater felicity?"

We talked of the melancholy end of a gentleman(1) who had destroyed himself. JOHNSON. "It was owing to imaginary difficulties in his affairs, which, had he talked of with any friend, would soon have vanished." BOSWELL. "Do you think, Sir, that all who commit suicide are mad?" JOHNSON. "Sir, they are often not universally disordered in their intellects, but one passion presses so upon them, that they yield to it, and commit suicide, as a passionate man will stab another." He added, "I have often thought, that after a man has taken the resolution to kill himself, it is not courage in him to do any thing, however desperate, because he has nothing to fear." GOLDSMITH. "I don't see that." JOHNSON. "Nay, but, my dear Sir, why should you not see what every one else sees?" GOLDSMITH. "It is for fear of

(1) The gentleman here meant was, no doubt, Johnson's friend, William Fitzherbert, Esq., Member for Derby, who terminated his own existence in January, 1772. — C. 1835.

something that he has resolved to kill himself: and will not that timid disposition restrain him?" JOHNSON. "It does not signify that the fear of something made him resolve; it is upon the state of his mind, after the resolution is taken, that I argue. Suppose a man, either from fear, or pride, or conscience, or whatever motive, has resolved to kill himself; when once the resolution is taken, he has nothing to fear. He may then go and take the king of Prussia by the nose, at the head of his army. He cannot fear the rack, who is resolved to kill himself. When Eustace Budgel (1) was walking down to the Thames, determined to drown himself, he might, if he pleased, without any apprehension of danger, have turned aside, and first set fire to St. James's palace."

LETTER 152. TO DR. GOLDSMITH.

"April 23. 1773.

"SIR,—I beg that you will excuse my absence to the Club; I am going this evening to Oxford.

"I have another favour to beg. It is that I may be considered as proposing Mr. Boswell for a candidate of our society, and that he may be considered as regularly nominated. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

(1) A friend and relative of Addison's, who drowned himself [in 1737] to escape a prosecution on account of forging the will of Dr. Tindal, in which Budgel had provided himself with a legacy of 2000*l*. To this Pope alludes:—

"Let Budgel charge low Grub Street on my quill,
And write whate'er he please — *except my will*." — C.

["Budgell, a rogue and rhymester, for no good,
(Unless his case be much misunderstood)
When teased with creditors' continual claims,
To die like Cato, leapt into the Thames!
And therefore be it lawful through the town
For any bard to poison, hang, or drown." — BYRON.]

On Tuesday, April 27., Mr. Beauclerk and I called on him in the morning. As we walked up Johnson s Court, I said, "I have a veneration for this court;" and was glad to find that Beauclerk had the same reverential enthusiasm. We found him alone. We talked of Mr. Andrew Stuart's elegant and plausible Letters to Lord Mansfield (1): a copy of which had been sent by the author to Dr. Johnson. JOHNSON. "They have not answered the end. They have not been talked of; I have never heard of them. This is owing to their not being sold. People seldom read a book which is given to them; and few are given. The way to spread a work is to sell it at a low price. No man will send to buy a thing that costs even sixpence, without an intention to read it." BOSWELL. 'May it not be doubted, Sir, whether it be proper to publish letters, arraigning the ultimate decision of an important cause by the supreme judicature of the nation?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I do not think it was wrong to publish these letters. If they are thought to do harm, why not answer them? But they will do no harm. If Mr. Douglas be indeed the son of Lady Jane he cannot be hurt: if he be not her son, and yet has the great estate of the family of Douglas, he may well submit to have a pamphlet against him by Andrew Stuart. Sir, I think such a publication does good, as it does good to show us the possibilities of human life. And, Sir, you will not say that the Douglas cause was a cause of easy decision, when it divided your Court as much as it could do, to be de-

(1) On the Douglas cause, in 1773.—C.

termined at all. When your judges are seven and seven, the casting vote of the president must be given on one side or other; no matter, for my argument, on which; one or the other *must* be taken; as when I am to move, there is no matter which leg I move first. And then, Sir, it was otherwise determined here. No, Sir, a more dubious determination of any question cannot be imagined." (1)

He said, "Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. Sir, a game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of chance; a man may be beat at times by one who has not the tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith's putting himself against another, is like a man laying a hundred to one, who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man's while. A man should not lay a hundred to one, unless he can easily spare it, though he has a hundred chances for him: he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state. When he contends, if he gets the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation: if he does not get the better, he is miserably vexed."

(1) I regretted that Dr. Johnson never took the trouble to study a question which interested nations. He would not even read a pamphlet which I wrote upon it, entitled, "The Essence of the Douglas Cause;" which, I have reason to flatter myself, had considerable effect in favour of Mr. Douglas; of whose legitimate filiation I was then, and am still, firmly convinced. Let me add, that no fact can be more respectably ascertained, than by the judgment of the most august tribunal in the world; a judgment in which Lord Mansfield and Lord Camden united in 1769, and from which only five of a numerous body entered a protest.

Johnson's own superlative powers of wit set him above any risk of such uneasiness. Garrick had remarked to me of him, a few days before, "Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared with him. You may be diverted by them; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no."

Goldsmith, however, was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in company with them one day, when Goldsmith said, that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed, that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. "For instance," said he, "the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and, envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill," continued he, "consists in making them talk like little fishes." While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie, he observed Johnson shaking his sides, and laughing. Upon which he smartly proceeded, "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES."

Johnson, though remarkable for his great variety of composition, never exercised his talents in fable, except we allow his beautiful tale published in Mrs. Williams's Miscellanies to be of that species. I have, however, found among his manuscript collections the following sketch of one:

"Glow-worm (1) lying in the garden saw a candle in a neighbouring palace, — and complained of the littleness of its own light; — another observed — wait a little; — soon dark, — have outlasted πολλ [*many*] of these glaring lights, which are only brighter as they haste to nothing."

On Thursday, April 29., I dined with him at General Oglethorpe's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, and Mr. Thrale. I was very desirous to get Dr. Johnson absolutely fixed in his resolution to go with me to the Hebrides this year; and I told him that I had received a letter from Dr. Robertson, the historian, upon the subject, with which he was much pleased, and now talked in such a manner of his long intended tour, that I was satisfied he meant to fulfil his engagement.

The custom of eating dogs at Otaheite being mentioned, Goldsmith observed, that this was also a custom in China; that a dog-butcher is as common there as any other butcher; and that when he walks abroad all the dogs fall on him. JOHNSON. "That is not owing to his killing dogs, Sir. I remember a butcher at Lichfield, whom a dog that was in the house where I lived, always attacked. It is the smell of carnage which provokes this, let the animals he has killed be what they may." GOLDSMITH. "Yes, there is a general abhorrence in animals at the signs of massacre. If you put a tub full of blood into a stable, the horses are like to go mad."

(1) It has already been observed, that one of his first Essays was a Latin poem on a Glow-worm; but whether it be any where extant, has not been ascertained. — M.

JOHNSON. "I doubt that." GOLDSMITH. "Nay, Sir, it is a fact well authenticated." THRALE. "You had better prove it before you put it into your book on natural history. You may do it in my stable if you will." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I would not have him prove it. If he is content to take his information from others, he may get through his book with little trouble, and without much endangering his reputation. But if he makes experiments for so comprehensive a book as his, there would be no end to them; his erroneous assertions would then fall upon himself; and he might be blamed for not having made experiments as to every particular."

The character of Mallet having been introduced, and spoken of slightingly by Goldsmith; JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, Mallet had talents enough to keep his literary reputation alive as long as he himself lived; and that, let me tell you, is a good deal." GOLDSMITH. "But I cannot agree that it was so. His literary reputation was dead long before his natural death. I consider an author's literary reputation to be alive only while his name will insure a good price for his copy from the booksellers. I will get you (to Johnson) a hundred guineas for any thing whatever that you shall write, if you put your name to it."

Dr. Goldsmith's new play, "She Stoops to Conquer," being mentioned; JOHNSON. "I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry."

Goldsmith having said, that Garrick's compliment to the Queen, which he introduced into the play of "The Chances," which he had altered and revised this year, was mean and gross flattery (1);—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I would not *write*, I would not give solemnly under my hand, a character beyond what I thought really true; but a speech on the stage, let it flatter ever so extravagantly, is formular. It has always been formular to flatter kings and queens; so much so, that even in our church-service we have 'our most religious king,' used indiscriminately, whoever is king. Nay, they even flatter themselves;—'we have been graciously pleased to grant.' No modern flattery, however, is so gross as that of the Augustan age, where the emperor was deified;—'*Præsens Divus habebitur Augustus.* And as to meanness"—(rising into warmth)—"how is it mean in a player,—a showman,—a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his queen? The attempt, indeed, was dangerous; for if it had missed, what became of Garrick, and what became of the queen? As Sir William Temple says of a great general, it is necessary not only that his designs be formed in a masterly manner, but that they should be attended with success. Sir, it is right, at a time when the royal family is not generally liked, to let it be seen that the people like at least one of them." SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

(1) [DON JOHN. "Ay; but when things are at the worst they'll mend: example does every thing, and the fair sex will certainly grow better, whenever the greatest is the best woman in the kingdom." Act v. sc. 2.]

"I do not perceive why the profession of a player should be despised; for the great and ultimate end of all the employments of mankind is to produce amusement. Garrick produces more amusement than any body." BOSWELL. "You say, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick exhibits himself for a shilling. In this respect he is only on a footing with a lawyer, who exhibits himself for his fee, and even will maintain any nonsense or absurdity, if the case require it. Garrick refuses a play or a part which he does not like: a lawyer never refuses." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, what does this prove? only that a lawyer is worse. Boswell is now like Jack in 'The Tale of a Tub' (1), who, when he is puzzled by an argument, hangs himself. He thinks I shall cut him down, but I'll let him hang" — (laughing vociferously). SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "Mr. Boswell thinks that the profession of a lawyer being unquestionably honourable, if he can show the profession of a player to be more honourable, he proves his argument."

(1) [The allusion is not to the Tale of a Tub, but to the *History of John Bull*, chap. xiii.]

CHAPTER X.

1773.

Dinner at Topham Beauclerk's. — Boswell elected of The Club. — Goldsmith in Company, and in his Study. — His Roman History. — "Talking for Victory." — Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. — Monuments in St. Paul's. — Milton. — Butler. — "The Whole Duty of Man." — Puns. — Lay Patronage. — The Bread Tree. — Savage Life. — Reasoning of Brutes. — Toleration. — Martyrdom. — Doctrine of the Trinity. — Government of Ireland. — Invocation of Saints. — "Goldy." — Literary Property. — State of Nature. — Male Succession. — Influence of the Seasons on the Mind. — Projected Visit to the Hebrides.

On Friday, April 30., I dined with him at Mr. Beauclerk's, where were Lord Charlemont, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and some more members of the Literary Club, whom he had obligingly invited to meet me, as I was this evening to be balloted for as candidate for admission into that distinguished society. Johnson had done me the honour to propose me, and Beauclerk was very zealous for me.

Goldsmith being mentioned: Johnson. "It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows. He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than any one else." Sir Joshua Reynolds. "Yet there is no man whose company is more liked." Johnson. "To

be sure, Sir. When people find a man of the most distinguished abilities as a writer, their inferior while he is with them, it must be highly gratifying to them. What Goldsmith comically says of himself is very true, — he always gets the better when he argues alone; meaning, that he is master of a subject in his study, and can write well upon it; but when he comes into company, grows confused, and unable to talk. Take him as a poet, his 'Traveller' is a very fine performance; ay, and so is his 'Deserted Village,' were it not sometimes too much the echo of his 'Traveller.' Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet, — as a comic writer, — or as an historian, he stands in the first class." BOSWELL. "An historian! My dear Sir, you surely will not rank his compilation of the Roman History with the works of other historians of this age?" JOHNSON. "Why, who are before him?" BOSWELL. "Hume,—Robertson, — Lord Lyttelton." JOHNSON (his antipathy to the Scotch beginning to rise). "I have not read Hume; but, doubtless, Goldsmith's History is better than the *verbiage* of Robertson, or the foppery of Dalrymple." BOSWELL. "Will you not admit the superiority of Robertson, in whose History (1) we find such penetration, such painting?" JOHNSON. "Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history, it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw, draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir

(1) [Robertson's Charles V. and Goldsmith's Roman History were both published in 1769.]

Joshua paints faces in a history-piece: he imagines an heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson's work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, Sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his History. Now Robertson might have put twice as much into his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool: the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, Sir; I always thought Robertson would be crushed by his own weight,—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you shortly all you want to know: Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson's cumbrous detail a second time; but Goldsmith's plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils: 'Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.' Goldsmith's abridgement is better than that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius; and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot, in the same places of the Roman History, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying every thing he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as entertaining as a Persian tale."

I cannot dismiss the present topic without observing, that it is probable that Dr. Johnson, who owned that he often "talked for victory," rather

urged plausible objections to Dr. Robertson's excellent historical works, in the ardour of contest, than expressed his real and decided opinion; for it is not easy to suppose, that he should so widely differ from the rest of the literary world.

JOHNSON. "I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poets' Corner, I said to him,

'*Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.*' (1)

When we got to Temple Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slily whispered me,

'*Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur* ISTIS.'" (2)

Johnson praised John Bunyan highly. "His 'Pilgrim's Progress' has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable, that it begins very much like the poem of Dante; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser."

A proposition which had been agitated, that monuments to eminent persons should, for the time to come, be erected in St. Paul's church, as well as in Westminster Abbey, was mentioned; and it was asked, who should be honoured by having his monument first erected there. Somebody suggested Pope.

(1) Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. iii. v. 13.

(2) In allusion to Dr. Johnson's supposed political principles, and perhaps his own.

JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, as Pope was a Roman Catholic, I would not have his to be first. I think Milton's rather should have the precedence.(1) I think more highly of him now than I did at twenty. There is more thinking in him and in Butler, than in any of our poets."

Some of the company expressed a wonder why the author of so excellent a book as "The Whole Duty of Man" should conceal himself.(2) JOHNSON. "There may be different reasons assigned for this, any one of which would be very sufficient. He may have been a clergyman, and may have thought that his religious counsels would have less weight when known to come from a man whose profession was theology. He may have been a man whose practice was not suitable to his principles, so that his character might injure the effect of his book, which he had written in a season of penitence. Or he may have been a man of rigid self-denial, so that he

(1) Here is another instance of his high admiration of Milton as a poet, notwithstanding his just abhorrence of that sour republican's political principles. His candour and discrimination are equally conspicuous. Let us hear no more of his "injustice to Milton."

(2) In a manuscript in the Bodleian Library several circumstances are stated, which strongly incline me to believe that Dr. Accepted Frewen, Archbishop of York, was the author of this work. — M.

See, on the subject of the author of this celebrated and excellent work, Gent. Mag. vol. xxiv. p. 26., and Ballard's Memoirs of Learned Ladies, p. 300. The late eccentric but learned Dr. Barrett, of Trinity College, Dublin, believed that Dr. Chapel, formerly provost of that college, was the author. Dr. Barrett was librarian of his college, and a perfect Magliabechi in slovenliness and erudition. It is odd, too, that Magliabechi's portrait is exceedingly like Dr. Barrett. — C.

would have no reward for his pious labours while in this world, but refer it all to a future state."

The gentlemen went away to their club, and I was left at Beauclerk's till the fate of my election should be announced to me. I sat in a state of anxiety which even the charming conversation of Lady Di Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found. Mr. Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance; Dr. Nugent, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined. Upon my entrance, Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and with humourous formality gave me a *charge*, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a good member of this club.

Goldsmith produced some very absurd verses which had been publicly recited to an audience for money. JOHNSON. "I can match this nonsense. There was a poem called 'Eugenio,' which came out some years ago, and concludes thus:—

'And now, ye trifling, self-assuming elves,
Brimful of pride, of nothing, of yourselves
Survey Eugenio, view him o'er and o'er,
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more.' (1)

(1) Dr. Johnson's memory here was not perfectly accurate: "Eugenio" does not conclude thus. There are eight more

Nay, Dryden, in his poem on the Royal Society, has these lines: —

' Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.' "

Talking of puns, Johnson, who had a great contempt for that species of wit, deigned to allow that there was one good pun in "Menagiana," I think on the word *corps*. (1)

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lines after the last of those quoted by him; and the passage which he meant to recite is as follows: —

" Say now, ye fluttering, poor assuming elves,
Stark full of pride, of folly, of — yourselves;
Say, where's the wretch of all your impious crew
Who dares confront his character to view?
Behold Eugenio, view him o'er and o'er,
Then sink into yourselves, and be no more."

Mr. Reed informs me that the author of Eugenio, Thomas Beech, a wine-merchant at Wrexham in Denbighshire, soon after its publication, viz. May 17. 1737, cut his own throat; and that it appears by Swift's works, that the poem had been shown to him, and received some of his corrections. Johnson had read "Eugenio" on his first coming to town, for we see it mentioned in one of his letters to Mr. Cave, which has been inserted in this work.

(1) I formerly thought that I had perhaps mistaken the word, and imagined it to be *corps*, from its similarity of sound to the real one. For an accurate and shrewd unknown gentleman, to whom I am indebted for some remarks on my work, observes on this passage: — " Q. if not on the word, *fort*? A vociferous French preacher said of Bourdaloue, ' Il prêche *fort bien*, et moi *bien fort*.' — Menagiana. See also Anecdotes Littéraires, art. Bourdaloue." But my ingenious and obliging correspondent, Mr. Abercrombie of Philadelphia, has pointed out to me the following passage; which renders the preceding conjecture unnecessary, and confirms my original statement: —

" Madame de Bourdonne, chanoinesse de Remiremont, venoit d'entendre un discours plein de feu et d'esprit, mais fort peu solide, et très-irrégulier. Une de ses amies, qui y prenoit intérêt pour l'orateur, lui dit en sortant, ' Eh bien, Madame, que vous semble-t-il de ce que vous venez d'entendre? Qu'il y a d'esprit?' — ' Il y a tant,' répondit Madame de Bourdonne, ' que je n'y ai pas vu de *corps*.' " Menagiana, tome ii. p. 64.

Much pleasant conversation passed, which Johnson relished with great good humour. But his conversation alone, or what led to it, or was interwoven with it, is the business of this work.

On Saturday, May 1., we dined by ourselves at our old rendezvous, the Mitre tavern. He was placid, but not much disposed to talk. He observed, that "The Irish mix better with the English than the Scotch do; their language is nearer to English; as a proof of which, they succeed very well as players, which Scotchmen do not. Then, Sir, they have not that extreme nationality which we find in the Scotch. I will do you, Boswell, the justice to say, that you are the most *unscottified* of your countrymen. You are almost the only instance of a Scotchman that I have known, who did not at every other sentence bring in some other Scotchman." (1)

We drank tea with Mrs. Williams. I introduced a question which has been much agitated in the church of Scotland, whether the claim of lay-patrons to present ministers to parishes be well founded; and supposing it to be well founded, whether it ought to be exercised without the concurrence of the people? That church is composed of a series of judicatures: a presbytery,—a synod, and finally, a general assembly; before all of which, this matter may be contended: and in some cases the presbytery having refused to induct or *settle*, as they call it,

(1) Garrick, as Boswell himself tells us, used to rally him on his nationality, and there are abundant instances in these volumes to show that he was not exempt from that amiable prejudice. —C.

the person presented by the patron, it has been found necessary to appeal to the general assembly. He said, I might see the subject well treated in the "Defence of Pluralities;" and although he thought that a patron should exercise his right with tenderness to the inclinations of the people of a parish, he was very clear as to his right. Then, supposing the question to be pleaded before the General Assembly, he dictated to me what follows. [See APPENDIX, No. III.]

Though I present to my readers Dr. Johnson's masterly thoughts on the subject, I think it proper to declare, that notwithstanding I am myself a lay-patron, I do not entirely subscribe to his opinion.

On Friday, May 7., I breakfasted with him at Mr. Thrale's in the Borough. While we were alone, I endeavoured as well as I could to apologise for a lady (1) who had been divorced from her husband by act of parliament. I said, that he had used her very ill, had behaved brutally to her, and that she could not continue to live with him without having her delicacy contaminated; that all affection for him was thus destroyed; that the essence of conjugal union being gone, there remained only a cold form, a mere civil

(1) No doubt Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of Charles Duke of Marlborough, born in 1734, married in 1757 to Viscount Bolingbroke, from whom she was divorced in 1768, and married immediately after Mr. Topham Beauclerk. All that Johnson says is very true; but he would have been better entitled to hold such high language if he had not *practically* waived his right by living in that lady's private society. He should either, as a strict moralist have refused her his countenance, or, as a man of honour and gratitude, been silent as to her frailties. He had no right to enjoy her society, and disparage her character. — C.

obligation; that she was in the prime of life, with qualities to produce happiness; that these ought not to be lost; and, that the gentleman on whose account she was divorced had gained her heart while thus unhappily situated. Seduced, perhaps, by the charms of the lady in question, I thus attempted to palliate what I was sensible could not be justified; for when I had finished my harangue, my venerable friend gave me a proper check:—"My dear Sir, never accustom your mind to mingle virtue and vice. The woman's a whore, and there's an end on't." (1)

He described the father of one of his friends thus: "Sir, he was so exuberant a talker at public meetings, that the gentlemen of his county were afraid of him. No business could be done for his declamation."

He did not give me full credit when I mentioned that I had carried on a short conversation by signs with some Esquimaux, who were then in London, particularly with one of them, who was a priest. He thought I could not make them understand me. No man was more incredulous as to particular facts which were at all extraordinary; and therefore no man was more scrupulously inquisitive, in order to discover the truth.

I dined with him this day at the house of my

(1) One evening, in the rooms at Brighthelmstone, happening to sit by Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Johnson chose to harangue very loudly about the nature, and use, and abuse of *divorces*. Many people gathered round them to hear what was said, and when my husband called him away, and told him *to whom* he had been talking, he received an answer which I will not venture to write down. — Piozzi.

friends, Messieurs Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry: there were present, their elder brother Mr. Dilly of Bedfordshire, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton, Mr. Claxton, Rev. Dr. Mayo, a dissenting minister, the Rev. Mr. Toplady, and my friend the Rev. Mr. Temple.

Hawkesworth's compilation of the Voyages to the South Sea being mentioned;—JOHNSON. "Sir, if you talk of it as a subject of commerce, it will be gainful; if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will not be much of that. Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him; and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think." BOSWELL. "But many insects, Sir." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty thousand species. They might have staid at home and discovered enough in that way."

Talking of birds, I mentioned Mr. Daines Barrington's ingenious Essay against the received notion of their migration. JOHNSON. "I think we have as good evidence for the migration of woodcocks as can be desired. We find they disappear at a certain time of the year, and appear again at a certain time of the year; and some of them, when weary in their flight, have been known to alight on the rigging of ships far out at sea." One of the company observed, that there had been instances of some of them found in summer in Essex. JOHNSON. "Sir, that strengthens our argument. *Exceptio probat regulam.* Some being found shows, that, if all remained, many would be found. A few sick or lame

ones may be found." GOLDSMITH. "There is a partial migration of the swallows; the stronger ones migrate, the others do not."

BOSWELL. "I am well assured that the people of Otaheite, who have the bread tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread; ploughing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are told of the advantages of civilised life. Were you to tell men who live without houses, how we pile brick upon brick, and rafter upon rafter, and that after a house is raised to a certain height, a man tumbles off a scaffold, and breaks his neck; he would laugh heartily at our folly in building; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, Sir (holding up a slice of a good loaf), this is better than the bread tree."

He repeated an argument, which is to be found in his "Rambler," against the notion that the brute creation is endowed with the faculty of reason: "Birds build by instinct; they never improve; they build their first nest as well as any one they ever build." GOLDSMITH. "Yet we see, if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a slighter nest and lay again." JOHNSON. "Sir, that is because at first she has full time and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight." GOLDSMITH. "The nidification of birds is what is least

known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it."

I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON. "Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. (1) To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word: it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right." MAYO. "I am of opinion, Sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right." JOHNSON. "Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks: but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks." MAYO. "Then, Sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first

(1) See *antè*, Vol. II. p. 317. —C.

Christians." JOHNSON. "Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth, but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other." GOLDSMITH. "But how is a man to act, Sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?" JOHNSON. "Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day." GOLDSMITH. "But have they a moral right to do this?" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from heaven." GOLDSMITH. "I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the grand signior to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should pro-

bably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet." JOHNSON. "Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, 'Thou shalt not kill.' But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity. I have said, that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from heaven." GOLDSMITH. "How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ——" JOHNSON (interrupting him). "Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ, but for insulting those who did believe it. (1) And, Sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred: as many of them ran away as could." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, there was your

(1) This seems to be altogether contrary to the fact. The first reformers, whether of Germany or England, were certainly not burned for insulting individuals: they were burned for heresy; and abominable as that was, it was less indefensible than what Johnson supposes, that they were burned for *insulting* individuals. — C.

countryman, Elwal [1], who you told me challenged King George with his black-guards, and his red-guards." JOHNSON. "My countryman, Elwal, Sir, should have been put in the stocks — a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough." BOSWELL. "But Elwal thought himself in the right." JOHNSON. "We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood," (meaning Moorfields). MAYO. "But, Sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extrà scandalum*; but, Sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?" MAYO. "This is making a joke of the subject." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, take it thus: — that you teach them the community of goods; for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to any thing but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, Sir, you sap a great principle in society, — property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they should run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog

(1) See antè, p. 193. — C

'em into their doublets?" MAYO. "I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act." BOSWELL. "So, Sir, though he sees an enemy to the state charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off!" MAYO. "He must be sure of its direction against the state." JOHNSON. "The magistrate is to judge of that. He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centers in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate, as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent.—Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable, that he who is chopping off his own fingers, may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place, and he is hanged." MAYO. "But, Sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience? JOHNSON. "I have already told you so, Sir? You are coming back to where you were." BOSWELL. "Dr. Mayo is always taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half price." JOHNSON. "Dr. Mayo, like other champions for

unlimited toleration, has got a set of words. (1) Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed, to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third, this would be very bad with respect to the state; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains, that the magistrates should 'tolerate all things that are tolerable.' This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable." TOPLADY. "Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity."

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who, at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once, when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company,

(1) Dr. Mayo's calm temper and steady perseverance, rendered him an admirable subject for the exercise of Dr. Johnson's powerful abilities. He never flinched; but, after reiterated blows, remained seemingly unmoved as at the first. The scintillations of Johnson's genius flashed every time he was struck, without his receiving any injury. Hence he obtained the epithet of *The Literary Anvil.*

Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: "Sir," said he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour: pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON (sternly). "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

A gentleman present (1) ventured to ask Dr. Johnson if there was not a material difference as to toleration of opinions which lead to action, and opinions merely speculative; for instance, would it be wrong in the magistrate to tolerate those who preach against the doctrine of the Trinity? Johnson was highly offended, and said, "I wonder, Sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company." He told me afterwards, that the impropriety was, that perhaps some of the company might have talked on the subject in such terms as might have shocked him; or he might have been forced to appear in their eyes a narrow-minded man. The gentleman, with submissive deference, said, he had only hinted at the question from a desire to hear

(1) No doubt Mr. Langton. See *post*, Aug. 22. 1773. — C.

Dr. Johnson's opinion upon it. JOHNSON. "Why then, Sir, I think that permitting men to preach any opinion contrary to the doctrine of the established church tends, in a certain degree, to lessen the authority of the church, and, consequently, to lessen the influence of religion." "It may be considered," said the gentleman, "whether it would not be politic to tolerate in such a case." JOHNSON. "Sir, we have been talking of *right*: this is another question. I think it is *not* politic to tolerate in such a case."

Though he did not think it fit that so awful a subject should be introduced in a mixed company, and therefore at this time waved the theological question; yet his own orthodox belief in the sacred mystery of the Trinity is evinced beyond doubt, by the following passage in his private devotions:—

"O Lord, hear my prayer, for Jesus Christ's sake; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, *three persons and one* GOD, be all honour and glory, world without end, Amen." [Pr. and Med., p. 40.]

BOSWELL. "Pray, Mr. Dilly, how does Dr. Leland's (1) 'History of Ireland' sell?" JOHNSON (bursting forth with a generous indignation). "The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell

(1) Dr. Thomas Leland, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin; born 1722; died 1785. His History of Ireland, in three vols. 4to., was published in 1773.]

them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation and other penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign: he had not been acknowledged by the parliament of Ireland, when they appeared in arms against him."

I here suggested something favourable of the Roman Catholics. TOPLADY. "Does not their invocation of saints suppose omnipresence in the saints?" JOHNSON. "No, Sir; it supposes only pluri-presence (1); and when spirits are divested of matter, it seems probable that they should see with more extent than when in an embodied state. There is, therefore, no approach to an invasion of any of the divine attributes, in the invocation of saints. But I think it is will-worship, and presumption. I see no command for it, and therefore think it is safer not to practise it."

He and Mr. Langton and I went together to THE CLUB, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us,—"I'll make Goldsmith forgive me;" and then called to him in a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined: I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much

(1) Surely it implies omnipresence in the same way that prayers to the Deity imply omnipresence. And, after all, what is the difference, to our bounded reason, between *pluri*-presence and *omni*-presence?—C.

from you, Sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr. Langton observed, that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit: and that he said to a lady who complained of his having talked little in company, "Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds." I observed that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and that so often an empty purse!"

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was every where paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. "Sir," said he, "you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic." (1)

(1) In some late publication it is stated that Buonaparte, repressing the flattery of one of his literary courtiers, said, "Pour

He was still more mortified, when, talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present, a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, "Stay, stay—Toctor Shonson is going to say something." This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed, that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but upon occasions would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends: as, Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. I remember one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson said, "We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy*'s play," Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, "I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*." Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. I recollect his telling me once, on my arrival in London, "Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr. Sheridan; he calls him now *Sherry derry*.

Dieu, laissez-nous au moins *la république des lettres.*" It has been also, with more probability, stated, that instead of being said *by*, it was said *of*, him. Perhaps, after all, the French story is but a version of this *bon mot* of Goldsmith's. — C.

LETTER 153. TO THE REV. MR. BAGSHAW (1),

At Bromley.

"May 8. 1773.

"SIR, — I return you my sincere thanks for your additions to my Dictionary; but the new edition has been published some time, and therefore I cannot now make use of them. Whether I shall ever revise it more I know not. If many readers had been as judicious, as diligent, and as communicative as yourself, my work had been better. The world must at present take it as it is. I am, Sir, your most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

On Sunday, May 8., I dined with Johnson at Mr. Langton's, with Dr. Beattie and some other company. He descanted on the subject of literary property. "There seems," said he, "to be in authors a stronger right of property than that by occupancy; a metaphysical right, a right, as it were, of creation,

(1) The Rev. Thomas Bagshaw, M. A., who died on the 20th of November, 1787, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, chaplain of Bromley College, in Kent, and rector of Southfleet. He had resigned the cure of Bromley parish some time before his death. For this, and another letter from Dr. Johnson in 1784, to the same truly respectable man, I am indebted to Dr. John Loveday, of the Commons, a son of the late learned and pious John Loveday, Esq. of Caversham, in Berkshire, who obligingly transcribed them for me from the originals in his possession. The worthy gentleman, having retired from business, now lives in Warwickshire. The world has been lately obliged to him as the editor of the late Rev. Dr. Townson's excellent work, modestly entitled "A Discourse on the Evangelical History, from the Interment to the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" to which is prefixed a truly interesting and pleasing account of the author, by the Rev. Mr. Ralph Churton. — [Dr. John Loveday died March 4. 1809, in his sixty-sixth year. Gent. Mag.]

which should from its nature be perpetual; but the consent of nations is against it; and indeed reason and the interests of learning are against it; for were it to be perpetual, no book, however useful, could be universally diffused amongst mankind, should the proprietor take it into his head to restrain its circulation. No book could have the advantage of being edited with notes, however necessary to its elucidation, should the proprietor perversely oppose it. For the general good of the world, therefore, whatever valuable work has once been created by an author, and issued out by him, should be understood as no longer in his power, but as belonging to the public; at the same time the author is entitled to an adequate reward. This he should have by an exclusive right to his work for a considerable number of years."

He attacked Lord Monboddo's strange speculation on the primitive state of human nature; observing, "Sir, it is all conjecture about a thing useless, even were it known to be true. Knowledge of all kinds is good. Conjecture, as to things useful, is good; but conjecture as to what it would be useless to know, such as whether men went upon all four, is very idle."

On Monday, May 9., as I was to set out on my return to Scotland next morning, I was desirous to see as much of Dr. Johnson as I could. But I first called on Goldsmith to take leave of him. The jealousy and envy, which, though possessed of many most amiable qualities, he frankly avowed, broke out

violently at this interview. (1) Upon another occasion, when Goldsmith confessed himself to be of an envious disposition, I contended with Johnson that we ought not to be angry with him, he was so candid in owning it. "Nay, Sir," said Johnson, "we must be angry that a man has such a superabundance of an odious quality, that he cannot keep it within his own breast, but it boils over." In my opinion, however, Goldsmith had not more of it than other people have, but only talked of it freely.

He now seemed very angry that Johnson was going to be a traveller; said "he would be a dead weight for me to carry, and that I should never be able to lug him along through the Highlands and Hebrides." Nor would he patiently allow me to enlarge upon Johnson's wonderful abilities; but exclaimed, "Is he like Burke, who winds into a subject like a serpent?" "But," said I, "Johnson is the Hercules who strangled serpents in his cradle."

I dined with Dr. Johnson at General Paoli's. He was obliged, by indisposition, to leave the company early; he appointed me, however, to meet him in the evening at Mr. (now Sir Robert) Chambers's in the Temple, where he accordingly came, though he continued to be very ill. Chambers, as is common on such occasions, prescribed various remedies to him. JOHNSON (fretted by pain). "Pr'ythee don't tease me. Stay till I am well, and then you shall tell me how to cure myself." He grew better, and talked

(1) I wonder why Boswell so often displays a malevolent feeling towards Goldsmith? Rivalry for Johnson's good graces, perhaps. — WALTER SCOTT.

with a noble enthusiasm of keeping up the representation of respectable families. His zeal on this subject was a circumstance in his character exceedingly remarkable, when it is considered that he himself had no pretensions to blood. I heard him once say, "I have great merit in being zealous for subordination and the honours of birth; for I can hardly tell who was my grandfather." He maintained the dignity and propriety of male succession, in opposition to the opinion of one of our friends (1), who had that day employed Mr. Chambers to draw his will, devising his estate to his three sisters, in preference to a remote heir male. Johnson called them "three *dowdies*," and said, with as high a spirit as the boldest baron in the most perfect days of the feudal system, "An ancient estate should always go to males. It is mighty foolish to let a stranger have it because he marries your daughter, and takes your name. As for an estate newly acquired by trade, you may give it, if you will, to the dog *Towser*, and let him keep his *own* name."

I have known him at times exceedingly diverted at what seemed to others a very small sport. He now laughed immoderately, without any reason, that we could perceive, at our friend's making his will:

(1) It seems, from many circumstances, that this was Mr. Langton; and that there was something more in the matter than a mere sally of obstreperous mirth. It is certain that the friendship of "twenty years' standing" (*post*, 22d August, 1773) between Johnson and Langton suffered, about this time, a serious interruption. Johnson chose to attribute it to the reproof he had lately given Langton at Mr. Dilly's table (*ante*, p. 297.); but it is more probable that it arose from this affair of the will. — C.

called him the *testator*, and added, "I dare say he thinks he has done a mighty thing. He won't stay till he gets home to his seat in the country, to produce this wonderful deed: he 'll call up the landlord of the first inn on the road; and, after a suitable preface upon mortality and the uncertainty of life, will tell him that he should not delay making his will; and here, Sir, will he say, is my will, which I have just made, with the assistance of one of the ablest lawyers in the kingdom; and he will read it to him (laughing all the time). He believes he has made this will; but he did not make it; you, Chambers, made it for him. I trust you have had more conscience than to make him say, 'being of sound understanding!' ha, ha ha! I hope he has left me a legacy. I'd have his will turned into verse, like a ballad."

In this playful manner did he run on, exulting in his own pleasantry, which certainly was not such as might be expected from the author of "The Rambler," but which is here preserved, that my readers may be acquainted even with the slightest occasional characteristics of so eminent a man.

Mr. Chambers did not by any means relish this jocularity upon a matter of which *pars magna fuit* (1), and seemed impatient till he got rid of us. Johnson could not stop his merriment, but continued it all the way till he got without the Temple Gate. He

(1) Mr. Chambers may have known more of the real state of the affair than Boswell, and been offended at the mode in which Johnson treated their common friend. It is absurd to think that he could have felt any displeasure on his own account.—C.

then burst into such a fit of laughter, that he appeared to be almost in a convulsion; and, in order to support himself, laid hold of one of the posts at the side of the foot pavement, and sent forth peals so loud, that in the silence of the night his voice seemed to resound from Temple Bar to Fleet Ditch.

This most ludicrous exhibition of the awful, melancholy, and venerable Johnson, happened well to counteract the feelings of sadness which I used to experience when parting with him for a considerable time. I accompanied him to his door, where he gave me his blessing.

He records of himself this year:—

"Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low Dutch language." [Pr. & Med. p. 191.]

It is to be observed, that he here admits an opinion of the human mind being influenced by seasons, which he ridicules in his writings. His progress, he says, was interrupted by a fever, "which, by the imprudent use of a small print, left an inflammation in his useful eye." We cannot but admire his spirit when we know, that amidst a complication of bodily and mental distress, he was still animated with the desire of intellectual improvement.(1) Various notes of his studies appear on different days, in his manuscript diary of this year; such as,—

(1) Not six months before his death, he wished me to teach him the scale of music: "Dr. Burney, teach me at least the alphabet of your language."—BURNEY.

"*Inchoavi lectionem Pentateuchi. Finivi lectionem Conf. Fab. Burdonum. Legi primum actum Troadum. Legi Dissertationem Clerici postremam de Pent. 2 of Clark's Sermons. L. Apollonii pugnam Betriciam. L. centum versus Homeri.*"

Let this serve as a specimen of what accessions of literature he was perpetually infusing into his mind, while he charged himself with idleness. (1)

In a letter from Edinburgh, dated the 29th of May, I pressed him to persevere in his resolution to make this year the projected visit to the Hebrides, of which he and I had talked for many years, and which I was confident would afford us much entertainment.

(1) This year died Mrs. Salusbury (mother of Mrs. Thrale), a lady whom he appears to have esteemed much, and whose memory he honoured with an epitaph. This event also furnished him with a subject of meditation for the evening of June the 18th, on which day this lady died: —

"Friday, June 18. 1773. This day, after dinner, died Mrs. Salusbury; she had for some days almost lost the power of speaking. Yesterday, as I touched her hand, and kissed it, she pressed my hand between her two hands, which she probably intended as the parting caress. At night her speech returned a little; and she said, among other things, to her daughter, I have had much time, and I hope I have used it. This morning being called about nine to feel her pulse, I said at parting, God bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake. She smiled, as pleased. She had her senses perhaps to the dying moment." [Pr. & Med., p. 127.] He complains, about this period, that his memory had been for a long time very much confused; and that names, and persons, and events, slide away strangely from him. "But," he adds, "I grow easier." [p. 129.] — C.

TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"Johnson's Court, July 5. 1773.

"DEAR SIR, — When your letter came to me, I was so darkened by an inflammation in my eye that I could not for some time read it. I can now write without trouble, and can read large prints. My eye is gradually growing stronger; and I hope will be able to take some delight in the survey of a Caledonian loch.

"Chambers is going a judge, with six thousand a year, to Bengal. He and I shall come down together as far as Newcastle, and thence I shall easily get to Edinburgh. Let me know the exact time when your courts intermit. I must conform a little to Chambers's occasions, and he must conform a little to mine. The time which you shall fix must be the common point to which we will come as near as we can. Except this eye, I am very well.

"Beattie is so caressed, and invited, and treated, and liked, and flattered by the great, that I can see nothing of him. I am in great hope that he will be well provided for, and then we will live upon him at the Marischal College, without pity or modesty.

"——— (1) left the town without taking leave of me, and is gone in deep dudgeon to ———. (2) Is not this very childish? Where is now my legacy?

"I hope your dear lady and her dear baby are both well. I shall see them too when I come; and I have that opinion of your choice, as to suspect that when I have seen Mrs. Boswell, I shall be less willing to go away. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Write to me as soon as you can. Chambers is now at Oxford."

(1) (2) Both these blanks must be filled with *Langton*. See *antè*, p. 345. — C.

I again wrote to him, informing him that the court of session rose on the 12th of August, hoping to see him before that time, and expressing, perhaps in too extravagant terms, my admiration of him, and my expectation of pleasure from our intended tour.

LETTER 155. TO JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

"August 3. 1773.

"DEAR SIR,—I shall set out from London on Friday the sixth of this month, and purpose not to loiter much by the way. Which day I shall be at Edinburgh, I cannot exactly tell. I suppose I must drive to an inn, and send a porter to find you.

"I am afraid Beattie will not be at his college soon enough for us, and I shall be sorry to miss him; but there no staying for the concurrence of all conveniences. We will do as well as we can. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"August 3. 1773.

"DEAR SIR,—Not being at Mr. Thrale's when your letter came, I had written the inclosed paper and sealed it; bringing it hither for a frank, I found yours. If any thing could repress my ardour, it would be such a letter as yours. To disappoint a friend is unpleasing; and he that forms expectations like yours, must be disappointed. Think only, when you see me, that you see a man who loves you, and is proud and glad that you love him. I am, Sir, your most affectionate,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

APPENDIX.

No. I. — ARGUMENT IN BEHALF OF HASTIE, THE SCHOOLMASTER, PROSECUTED FOR UNDUE SEVERITY.

(See p. 222.)

The charge is, that he has used immoderate and cruel correction. Correction in itself is not cruel; children, being not reasonable, can be governed only by fear. To impress this fear is, therefore, one of the first duties of those who have the care of children. It is the duty of a parent; and has never been thought inconsistent with parental tenderness. It is the duty of a master, who is in his highest exaltation when he is *loco parentis*. Yet, as good things become evil by excess, correction, by being immoderate, may become cruel. But when is correction immoderate? When it is more frequent or more severe than is required *ad monendum et docendum*, for reformation and instruction. No severity is cruel which obstinacy makes necessary; for the greatest cruelty would be, to desist, and leave the scholar too careless for instruction, and too much hardened for reproof. Locke, in his treatise of education, mentions a mother, with applause, who whipped an infant eight times before she subdued it; for had she stopped at the seventh act of correction, her daughter, says he, would have been ruined. The degrees of obstinacy, in young minds are very different: as different must be the degrees of persevering severity. A stubborn scholar must be corrected till he is subdued. The discipline of a school is military There must be

either unbounded licence or absolute authority. The master, who punishes, not only consults the future happiness of him who is the immediate subject of correction, but he propagates obedience through the whole school; and establishes regularity by exemplary justice. The victorious obstinacy of a single boy would make his future endeavours of reformation or instruction totally ineffectual. Obstinacy, therefore, must never be victorious. Yet, it is well known, that there sometimes occurs a sullen and hardy resolution, that laughs at all common punishment, and bids defiance to all common degrees of pain. Correction must be proportionate to occasions. The flexible will be reformed by gentle discipline, and the refractory must be subdued by harsher methods. The degrees of scholastic, as of military punishment, no stated rules can ascertain. It must be enforced till it overpowers temptation; till stubbornness becomes flexible, and perverseness regular. Custom and reason have, indeed, set some bounds to scholastic penalties. The schoolmaster inflicts no capital punishments; nor enforces his edicts by either death or mutilation. The civil law has wisely determined, that a master who strikes at a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal. But punishments, however severe, that produce no lasting evil, may be just and reasonable, because they may be necessary. Such have been the punishments used by the respondent. No scholar has gone from him either blind or lame, or with any of his limbs or powers injured or impaired. They were irregular, and he punished them: they were obstinate, and he enforced his punishment. But however provoked, he never exceeded the limits of moderation, for he inflicted nothing beyond present pain: and how much of that was required, no man is so little able to determine as those who have determined against him — the parents of the offenders. It has been said, that he used unprecedented and improper instruments of correction. Of this accusation the meaning is not very easy to be found. No instrument of correction is more proper than another, but as it is better adapted to produce present pain without lasting mischief. Whatever were his instruments, no lasting mischief

has ensued; and therefore, however unusual, in hands so cautious they were proper. It has been objected, that the respondent admits the charge of cruelty by producing no evidence to confute it. Let it be considered, that his scholars are either dispersed at large in the world, or continue to inhabit the place in which they were bred. Those who are dispersed cannot be found; those who remain are the sons of his prosecutors, and are not likely to support a man to whom their fathers are enemies. If it be supposed that the enmity of their fathers proves the justness of the charge, it must be considered how often experience shows us, that men who are angry on one ground will accuse on another; with how little kindness, in a town of low trade, a man who lives by learning is regarded; and how implicitly, where the inhabitants are not very rich, a rich man is hearkened to and followed. In a place like Campbell-town, it is easy for one of the principal inhabitants to make a party. It is easy for that party to heat themselves with imaginary grievances. It is easy for them to oppress a man poorer than themselves; and natural to assert the dignity of riches, by persisting in oppression. The argument which attempts to prove the impropriety of restoring him to the school, by alleging that he has lost the confidence of the people, is not the subject of juridical consideration; for he is to suffer, if he must suffer, not for their judgment, but for his own actions. It may be convenient for them to have another master; but it is a convenience of their own making. It would be likewise convenient for him to find another school; but this convenience he cannot obtain. The question is not what is now convenient, but what is generally right. If the people of Campbell-town be distressed by the restoration of the respondent, they are distressed only by their own fault; by turbulent passions and unreasonable desires; by tyranny, which law has defeated, and by malice, which virtue has surmounted.

No. II. — ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE SCOTTISH LAW DOCTRINE OF "VICIOUS INTROMISSION."

(See p. 234.)

This, we are told, is a law which has its force only from the long practice of the court; and may, therefore, be suspended or modified as the court shall think proper.

Concerning the power of the court to make or to suspend a law, we have no intention to inquire. It is sufficient for our purpose that every just law is dictated by reason; and that the practice of every legal court is regulated by equity. It is the quality of reason to be invariable and constant; and of equity, to give to one man what, in the same case, is given to another. The advantage which humanity derives from law is this; that the law gives every man a rule of action, and prescribes a mode of conduct which shall entitle him to the support and protection of society. That the law may be a rule of action, it is necessary that it be known; it is necessary that it be permanent and stable. The law is the measure of civil right, but if the measure be changeable, the extent of the thing measured never can be settled.

To permit a law to be modified at discretion, is to leave the community without law. It is to withdraw the direction of that public wisdom, by which the deficiencies of private understanding are to be supplied. It is to suffer the rash and ignorant to act at discretion, and then to depend for the legality of that action on the sentence of the judge. He that is thus governed lives not by law, but by opinion: not by a certain rule, to which he can apply his intention before he acts, but by an uncertain and variable opinion, which he can never know but after he has committed the act on which that opinion shall be passed. He lives by a law (if a law it be), which he can never know before he has offended it. To this case may be justly applied that important principle, *misera est servitus ubi jus est aut incognitum aut vagum.* If intromission be not cri-

minal till it exceeds a certain point, and that point be unsettled, and consequently different in different minds, the right of intromission, and the right of the creditor arising from it, are all *jura vaga*, and, by consequence, are *jura incognita*; and the result can be no other than a *misera servitus*, an uncertainty concerning the event of action, a servile dependence on private opinion.

It may be urged, and with great plausibility, that there may be intromission without fraud; which, however true, will by no means justify an occasional and arbitrary relaxation of the law. The end of law is protection as well as vengeance. Indeed, vengeance is never used but to strengthen protection. That society only is well governed, where life is freed from danger, and from suspicion; where possession is so sheltered by salutary prohibitions, that violation is prevented more frequently than punished. Such a prohibition was this, while it operated with its original force. The creditor of the deceased was not only without loss, but without fear. He was not to seek a remedy for an injury suffered; for injury was warded off.

As the law has been sometimes administered, it lays us open to wounds, because it is imagined to have the power of healing. To punish fraud when it is detected is the proper art of vindictive justice; but to prevent frauds, and make punishment unnecessary, is the great employment of legislative wisdom. To permit intromission, and to punish fraud, is to make law no better than a pitfall. To tread upon the brink is safe; but to come a step further is destruction. But, surely, it is better to enclose the gulf, and hinder all access, than, by encouraging us to advance a little, to entice us afterwards a little further, and let us perceive our folly only by our destruction.

As law supplies the weak with adventitious strength, it likewise enlightens the ignorant with intrinsic understanding. Law teaches us to know when we commit injury and when we suffer it. It fixes certain marks upon actions, by which we are admonished to do or to forbear them. *Qui sibi bene temperat in licitis*, says one of the fathers, *nunquam cadet in illi-*

cata. He who never intromits at all, will never intromit with fraudulent intentions.

The relaxation of the law against vicious intromission has been very favourably represented by a great master of jurisprudence (1), whose words have been exhibited with unnecessary pomp, and seem to be considered as irresistibly decisive. The great moment of his authority makes it necessary to examine his position. "Some ages ago," says he, "before the ferocity of the inhabitants of this part of the island was subdued, the utmost severity of the civil law was necessary, to restrain individuals from plundering each other. Thus, the man who intermeddled irregularly with the moveables of a person deceased was subjected to all the debts of the deceased without limitation. This makes a branch of the law of Scotland, known by the name of *vicious intromission*; and so rigidly was this regulation applied in our courts of law, that the most trifling moveable abstracted *malâ fide*, subjected the intermeddler to the foregoing consequences, which proved in many instances a most rigorous punishment. But this severity was necessary, in order to subdue the undisciplined nature of our people. It is extremely remarkable, that in proportion to our improvement in manners, this regulation has been gradually softened and applied by our sovereign court with a sparing hand."

I find myself under a necessity of observing, that this learned and judicious writer has not accurately distinguished the deficiencies and demands of the different conditions of human life, which, from a degree of savageness and independence, in which all laws are vain, passes or may pass, by innumerable gradations, to a state of reciprocal benignity in which laws shall be no longer necessary. Men are first wild and unsocial, living each man to himself, taking from the weak and losing to the strong. In their first coalitions of society, much of this original savageness is retained. Of general happiness, the product of general confidence, there is yet no thought. Men

(1) Lord Kames, in his *Historical Law Tracts*. — Boswell.

continue to prosecute their own advantages by the nearest way; and the utmost severity of the civil law is necessary to restrain individuals from plundering each other. The restraints then necessary are restraints from plunder, from acts of public violence, and undisguised oppression. The ferocity of our ancestors, as of all other nations, produced not fraud but rapine. They had not yet learned to cheat, and attempted only to rob. As manners grow more polished, with the knowledge of good, men attain likewise dexterity in evil. Open rapine becomes less frequent, and violence gives way to cunning. Those who before invaded pastures and stormed houses, now begin to enrich themselves by unequal contracts and fraudulent intromissions. It is not against the violence of ferocity, but the circumventions of deceit, that this law was framed; and I am afraid the increase of commerce, and the incessant struggle for riches which commerce excites, give us no prospect of an end speedily to be expected of artifice and fraud. It therefore seems to be no very conclusive reasoning, which connects those two propositions: — "the nation is become less ferocious, and therefore the laws against fraud and *covin* shall be relaxed."

Whatever reason may have influenced the judges to a relaxation of the law, it was not that the nation was grown less fierce; and, I am afraid, it cannot be affirmed, that it is grown less fraudulent.

Since this law has been represented as rigorously and unreasonably penal, it seems not improper to consider what are the conditions and qualities that make the justice or propriety of a penal law.

To make a penal law reasonable and just, two conditions are necessary, and two proper. It is necessary that the law should be adequate to its end; that, if it be observed, it shall prevent the evil against which it is directed. It is, secondly, necessary that the end of the law be of such importance as to deserve the security of a penal sanction. The other conditions of a penal law, which, though not absolutely necessary, are to a very high degree fit, are, that to the moral violation of the law there are many temptations, and that of the physical observance there is great facility.

All these conditions apparently concur to justify the law which we are now considering. Its end is the security of property; and property very often of great value. The method by which it effects the security is efficacious, because it admits, in its original rigour, no gradations of injury; but keeps guilt and innocence apart, by a distinct and definite limitation. He that intromits is criminal; he that intromits not is innocent. Of the two secondary considerations, it cannot be denied that both are in our favour. The temptation to intromit is frequent and strong; so strong and so frequent, as to require the utmost activity of justice, and vigilance of caution, to withstand its prevalence; and the method by which a man may entitle himself to legal intromission is so open and so facile, that to neglect it is a proof of fraudulent intention; for why should a man omit to do (but for reasons which he will not confess) that which he can do so easily, and that which he knows to be required by the law? If temptation were rare, a penal law might be deemed unnecessary. If the duty enjoined by the law were of difficult performance, omission, though it could not be justified, might be pitied. But in the present case neither equity nor compassion operate against it. A useful, a necessary law is broken, not only without a reasonable motive, but with all the inducements to obedience that can be derived from safety and facility.

I therefore return to my original position, that a law, to have its effects, must be permanent and stable. It may be said, in the language of the schools, *Lex non recipit majus et minus*, — we may have a law, or we may have no law, but we cannot have half a law. We must either have a rule of action, or be permitted to act by discretion and by chance. Deviations from the law must be uniformly punished, or no man can be certain when he shall be safe.

That from the rigour of the original institution this court has sometimes departed, cannot be denied. But, as it is evident that such deviations, as they make law uncertain, make life unsafe, I hope, that of departing from it there will now be an end; that the wisdom of our ancestors will be treated with

due reverence; and that consistent and steady decisions will furnish the people with a rule of action, and leave fraud and fraudulent intromissions no future hope of impunity or escape.

No. III. — ARGUMENT BY DR. JOHNSON IN DEFENCE OF LAY PATRONAGE.

(See p. 287.)

Against the right of patrons is commonly opposed, by the inferior judicatures, the plea of conscience. Their conscience tells them that the people ought to choose their pastor; their conscience tells them that they ought not to impose upon a congregation a minister ungrateful and unacceptable to his auditors. Conscience is nothing more than a conviction felt by ourselves of something to be done, or something to be avoided; and in questions of simple unperplexed morality, conscience is very often a guide that may be trusted. But before conscience can determine, the state of the question is supposed to be completely known. In questions of law, or of fact, conscience is very often confounded with opinion. No man's conscience can tell him the rights of another man; they must be known by rational investigation or historical inquiry. Opinion, which he that holds it may call his conscience, may teach some men that religion would be promoted, and quiet preserved, by granting to the people universally the choice of their ministers. But it is a conscience very ill informed that violates the rights of one man for the convenience of another. Religion cannot be promoted by injustice; and it was never yet found that a popular election was very quietly transacted.

That justice would be violated by transferring to the people the right of patronage, is apparent to all who know whence that right had its original. The right of patronage was not at first a privilege torn by power from unresisting poverty. It is not an autho ity at first usurped in times of ignorance, and established only by succession and by precedents. It is not a grant capriciously made from a higher tyrant to a lower. It is a right dearly purchased by the first possessors, and justly inherited by those that succeeded them. When Christianity was established in this island, a regular mode of public worship was prescribed. Public worship requires a public place; and the proprietors of lands, as they were converted, built churches for their families and their vassals. For the maintenance of ministers, they settled a certain portion of their lands; and a district, through which each minister was required to extend his care, was, by that circumscription, constituted a parish. This is a position so generally received in England, that the extent of a manor and of a parish are regularly received for each other. The churches which the proprietors of lands had thus built and thus endowed, they justly thought themselves entitled to provide with ministers; and when the episcopal government prevails, the bishop has no power to reject a man nominated by the patron, but for some crime that might exclude him from the priesthood. For the endowment of the church being the gift of the landlord, he was consequently at liberty to give it, according to his choice, to any man capable of performing the holy offices. The people did not choose him, because the people did not pay him.

We hear it sometimes urged, that this original right is passed out of memory, and is obliterated and obscured by many translations of property and changes of government; that scarce any church is now in the hands of the heirs of the builders; and that the present persons have entered subsequently upon the pretended rights by a thousand accidental and unknown causes. Much of this, perhaps, is true. But how is the right of patronage extinguished? If the right followed the lands, it is possessed by the same equity by which the lands

are possessed. It is, in effect, part of the manor, and protected by the same laws with every other privilege. Let us suppose an estate forfeited by treason, and granted by the crown to a new family. With the lands were forfeited all the rights appendant to those lands; by the same power that grants the lands, the rights also are granted. The right lost to the patron falls not to the people, but is either retained by the crown, or, what to the people is the same thing, is by the crown given away. Let it change hands ever so often, it is possessed by him that receives it with the same right as it was conveyed. It may, indeed, like all our possessions, be forcibly seized or fraudulently obtained. But no injury is still done to the people; for what they never had, they have never lost. Caius may usurp the right of Titius, but neither Caius nor Titius injure the people; and no man's conscience, however tender or however active, can prompt him to restore what may be proved to have been never taken away. Supposing, what I think cannot be proved, that a popular election of ministers were to be desired, our desires are not the measure of equity. It were to be desired that power should be only in the hands of the merciful, and riches in the possession of the generous; but the law must leave both riches and power where it finds them; and must often leave riches with the covetous, and power with the cruel. Convenience may be a rule in little things, where no other rule has been established. But as the great end of government is to give every man his own, no inconvenience is greater than that of making right uncertain. Nor is any man more an enemy to public peace, than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination, by inciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher.

Having thus shown that the right of patronage, being originally purchased, may be legally transferred, and that it is now in the hands of lawful possessors, at least as certainly as any other right; we have left to the advocates of the people no other plea but that of convenience. Let us, therefore, now consider what the people would really gain by a general abolition of the

right of patronage. What is most to be desired by such a change is, that the country should be supplied with better ministers. But why should we suppose that the parish will make a wiser choice than the patron? If we suppose mankind actuated by interest, the patron is more likely to choose with caution, because he will suffer more by choosing wrong. By the deficiencies of his minister, or by his vices, he is equally offended with the rest of the congregation; but he will have this reason more to lament them, that they will be imputed to his absurdity or corruption. The qualifications of a minister are well known to be learning and piety. Of his learning the patron is probably the only judge in the parish; and of his piety not less a judge than others; and is more likely to inquire minutely and diligently before he gives a presentation, than one of the parochial rabble, who can give nothing but a vote. It may be urged, that though the parish might not choose better ministers, they would at least choose ministers whom they like better, and who would therefore officiate with greater efficacy. That ignorance and perverseness should always obtain what they like was never considered as the end of government; of which it is the great and standing benefit, that the wise see for the simple, and the regular act for the capricious. But that this argument supposes the people capable of judging, and resolute to act according to their best judgments, though this be sufficiently absurd, it is not all its absurdity. It supposes not only wisdom, but unanimity, in those, who upon no other occasions are unanimous or wise. If by some strange concurrence all the voices of a parish should unite in the choice of any single man, though I could not charge the patron with injustice for presenting a minister, I should censure him as unkind and injudicious. But it is evident, that as in all other popular elections there will be a contrariety of judgment and acrimony of passion, a parish upon every vacancy would break into factions, and the contest for the choice of a minister would set neighbours at variance, and bring discord into families. The minister would be taught all the arts of a candidate, would flatter some, and bribe others;

and the electors, as in all other cases, would call for holidays and ale, and break the heads of each other during the jollity of the canvass. The time must, however, come at last, when one of the factions must prevail, and one of the ministers get possession of the church. On what terms does he enter upon his ministry but those of enmity with half his parish? By what prudence or what diligence can he hope to conciliate the affections of that party by whose defeat he has obtained his living? Every man who voted against him will enter the church with hanging head and downcast eyes, afraid to encounter that neighbour, by whose vote and influence he has been overpowered. He will hate his neighbour for opposing him, and his minister for having prospered by his opposition; and as he will never see him but with pain, he will never see him but with hatred. Of a minister presented by the patron, the parish has seldom any thing worse to say than that they do not know him. Of a minister chosen by a popular contest, all those who do not favour him have nursed up in their bosoms principles of hatred and reasons of rejection. Anger is excited principally by pride. The pride of a common man is very little exasperated by the supposed usurpation of an acknowledged superior. He bears only his little share of a genera evil, and suffers in common with the whole parish: but when the contest is between equals, the defeat has many aggravations; and he that is defeated by his next neighbour is seldom satisfied without some revenge: and it is hard to say what bitterness of malignity would prevail in a parish where these elections should happen to be frequent, and the enmity of opposition should be rekindled before it had cooled.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.